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A SHORT HISTORY OF
"THE PEOPLE CALLED METHODISTS."



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A SHORT HISTORY OF

“The People Called Methodists,”

FROM THE DAYS OF THE WESLEYS TO THE METHODIST
ÆCUMENICAL CONFERENCE HELD AT CITY ROAD
CHAPEL, LONDON, IN SEPTEMBER, 1881.

BY THE REV.

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PREFACE.

THE following work is an abridgment of a much larger volume, entitled "The Illustrated History of Methodism in Great Britain and America." The illustrations are numerous, and some of them quaint and singular, but to reproduce them here would have involved considerable expense, and the present object is to supply a work, chiefly for readers on this side the Atlantic, which will give them a comparatively brief history of Methodism throughout the world. To do this was no easy task, for Dr. Stevens' "History of Methodism" fills three closely printed volumes, and his "History of Methodism in America" four volumes more. Mr. Daniels has studied the art of condensation, and out of an immense stock of materials has produced a work of considerable value to all students of ecclesiastical history. The literature relating to Methodism and its progress is now so voluminous, that very few could wade through it even if it lay before them, so that such a book as this can scarcely fail to be serviceable to many, and its size and price will place it within the reach of hundreds who cannot get time to read larger works.

This work, in its original form, was published by the Methodist Book Concern, New York, and was warmly recommended by Dr. Whedon and Bishop Harris. The latter observes, "Methodism is not a new system of philosophy, ethics, or theology; neither is it a mere method in

religion, as its name might imply. It does not belong to that class of institutions which can properly be said to be 'founded' by any one, as dynasties or schools are said to be founded by this adventurer in politics, or that reformer in religion; and the author of this volume is right, as it seems to me, in saying that John Wesley was 'as much the product as the promoter of Methodism.' It was not John Wesley who founded Methodism, so much as it was Methodism which founded John Wesley. The tide which bore him on in his wonderful career was one of those outpourings of waters such as the prophet saw in his vision; 'first ankle deep, then rising to the knees, then to the loins, and finally waters to swim in, a river that could not be passed over.'"

This is partly true, and yet, but for the genius and the piety of John Wesley, Methodism would never have become the system it is. John Wesley did not design it. He had no plan when he entered on his career. The work grew in his hands, and still grew, but he guided it, trained it, consolidated it, though ever, as we doubt not, under the special direction of the Spirit of God.

It is a wonderful organization. It is a wonder to the world, a wonder to itself, a wonder especially to all who are within its pale. That those who are outside of it should not understand it is not at all surprising; yet it is better understood to-day than it ever was, and the occasional attacks still made upon it are so puny and insignificant as scarcely to need any notice or reply.

Nowhere is Methodism sectarian in its spirit. It is the friend of all, the enemy of none. It rejoices in the triumphs of all other sections of the true Church of Christ; and is ever ready to operate with other Christians in all noble and sacred enterprises. Specially in its Mission-fields its agents are often found working side by side with those of other churches, and whilst maintaining its own authority, and contending, when necessary, for its own rights, it fights against nothing but error, sin, and the devil.

Mr. Daniels has brought down his history to the Œcumenical Conference of 1881, of which he gives a sketch from an American point of view. It was an extraordinary gathering, and the full report of it, recently published, is a document which will go down to a late posterity. Its practical results will appear in future days ; but no one who attended its sittings could fail to rejoice in the wonderful harmony of sentiment and feeling which prevailed, and in the disposition to blend all minor differences which exist among the various sections of the great Methodist family. Time was, as this volume shows, when Methodism, both in Great Britain and America, was torn and rent with divisions of opinion on questions of discipline—never with respect to doctrine—and some have assailed it because of these divisions ; but what Church, either in earlier or in later times, Roman, Greek, Anglican, or Scotch, has been without them ? The Œcumenical Conference was intended to heal the divisions of Methodism as far as practicable, and certainly the spirit of that Conference gave promise of such unanimity as could scarcely be anticipated a few years ago. What the future of Methodism will be, who can tell ? Perhaps the day will come when its several branches will be formed into one grand and united system for the spread of holiness throughout the world. Such a union is not practicable, perhaps not desirable, just yet ; but one thing is both practicable and desirable, that the different sections of the Methodist Church, on both sides of the Atlantic and everywhere else, should no longer be opposed one to another, but, forgetting their past contentions, should join in one spirit to oppose the common foe.

The author of this work calls the second part of it, in this edition, " World-wide Methodism." I have added a chapter on the missions of British Methodism, which enters into them somewhat more fully than Mr. Daniels had done ; and I have inserted a few paragraphs, enclosed in brackets, [], in reference to some of the great leaders of Methodism during

the last quarter of the century. There are many other names that are historical in Methodism, or will hereafter become so, such as Lomas, Bedford, Vasey, Rattenbury, and Coley, which ought to have been introduced had there been room. But their record is elsewhere, though not here ; and it is with no little joy that we anticipate meeting with many such men again in the house of our Father above.

I have written this preface, and carried this work through the press, at the request of the publishers, and I trust that it will be widely circulated and extensively read wherever Methodism is known.

THORNLEY SMITH.

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CHAPTER I.

THE WESLEY FAMILY.

A CAREFUL student of human nature has said, "When God sets out to make a great man, He first makes a great woman;" a statement eminently true in the case of John Wesley, but only one side of the truth; for on his father's, as well as on his mother's side, he inherited great talents and high moral endowments.

The Wesley, or Westley, family was one of high respectability in the south of England. Its annals can be traced as far back as the fourteenth century, and it is interesting to find in almost every generation an eminent clergyman and scholar. Bartholomew Wesley, the great-grandfather of John and Charles Wesley, rector of Charmouth and Catherston, gained the title of "the fanatical parson" on account of his opposition to State Church pretensions and his sacrifices for the sake of his opinions; for, on the accession of Charles II. to the English throne, this Bartholomew Wesley, as well as hundreds of other clergymen, was ejected from his "livings," and forbidden, by the "Five Mile Act," to approach within that distance of his former parishes.

John Westley, his son, was educated for the priesthood at the University of Oxford. During the civil war the splendid halls and chapels on which Cardinal Wolsey had lavished untold wealth were turned into storehouses, magazines, and barracks; but when Cromwell became master of England, under the title of "Lord Protector," the Oxford colleges were repaired, the schools re-opened, and this John Westley, grandfather of John and Charles Wesley, was one of the first as well as one of the foremost scholars admitted thereto. In 1658, the year of Cromwell's death, he became the

minister at Whitchurch, a small market town in Shropshire ; but with the disappearance of the Commonwealth, and the re-establishment of the throne and the episcopal form of church government, he was denounced as one of Cromwell's Puritans, seized by the State Church officers, and carried to prison at Blandford ; but so admirable was his conduct at the examination, that he was allowed to return to his parish, his gentleness and piety having quite disarmed his envious and spiteful accusers.

The 24th of August, 1662, was the day appointed for carrying into effect the "Act of Uniformity," by which the episcopal form of government was to be fully restored in the Church, and by which all its ministers were required, not only to use the Book of Common Prayer, but also to avow their "unfeigned assent and consent to all and everything contained therein." Mr. Westley, who would not compromise his conscience for the sake of his "living," preached his farewell sermon on the preceding Sunday, August 17th, and thenceforth became an outcast and a wanderer, hunted from town to town, repeatedly thrust into prison, but ever maintaining his faith and his patience, unmoved alike by threats or promises, preaching the Gospel as he could find opportunity, and furnishing an admirable illustration of that tenet of his faith entitled "the perseverance of the saints," until his sufferings broke his heart and wore out his life, and he sunk into a premature grave about 1670.

Such was the grandfather and namesake of the great Methodist ; gentle, incorruptible, devout, with a conscience quick as the apple of an eye, and with a most unconquerable will. He could not be permitted to hold his place in the Church *of* England ; but that he was a true and faithful member of the Church *in* England there is no occasion to deny.

Samuel Westley, in the next generation, was also a clergyman. He was left an orphan in his infancy, which fact may account for the slight impression made upon him by the heroic sacrifices and sufferings endured by his father and grandfather in defence of the rights of conscience. In the academy at Newington Green, a private school of the dissenters, in which he was placed to be trained for a Non-

conformist minister, he had for his school-fellows the famous Daniel De Foe and a lad named Crusoe, after whom the immortal hero of the lonely island was named. Here young Westley soon distinguished himself as a writer, and when only seventeen years of age he was selected to reply to certain severe articles which had been published against the dissenters ; but the course of reading by which he sought to prepare himself for his task had the opposite effect upon his mind from what he had intended, for it led him to espouse the cause of the Establishment, and he became thenceforth a sturdy defender of the State Church, and an ardent Tory in politics, which sentiments in after years cost him no little trouble. Knowing the opposition he was sure to encounter from his mother, as well as from an old aunt, who appears to have offered an asylum to the widow and her family, and to have been his patron at school, young Westley left her house one morning very early, with only a few pounds in his pocket, and started for Oxford, and entered himself at Exeter College, where in due time he took his bachelor's degree.

In 1690 he was ordained as deacon in the Established Church, and presented by the Marquis of Normanby to the small living of South Ormsby. This nobleman, who owned the parish, thought to own its minister also, but the Reverend Samuel was not the man to be kept in subjection, and, having turned the marquis' mistress out of doors, who had insisted on being a visitor at the rectory, he himself was thrust out of his living, but soon afterward obtained the rectorship of the parish of Epworth, in Lincolnshire, a position in the gift of the Crown, where he passed the remainder of his life, and where his two famous sons, John and Charles, were born ; the former on the 17th of June, 1703, and the latter on the 18th of December, 1708.*

It would seem that the Ruler of events was planning these two men several generations beforehand, and was carefully developing just those elements of mind and body which were to be required in the great mission on which He had determined to send them. In the grandfather He seems to have

* Rev. Samuel Wesley left the “t” out of the family name about the time of his removal to Epworth.

arrived at the proper pattern for the great leader, John Wesley, and in their father, the ideal for the poet of this great revival, Charles Wesley; for John is greatly like his grandfather, while Charles is the *fac-simile* of his father, though in both cases there is a very considerable ascent as well as descent.

All writers of Methodist history dwell with rapture on the talents and virtues of that admirable English matron, Mrs. Susanna Wesley; while to the devout student thereof the gracious purpose of God is manifest in preparing and uniting two such noble lines of power and genius as those which were joined in the persons of Samuel Westley and Susanna Annesley.

This lady was the youngest daughter of Rev. Samuel Annesley, LL.D., a nephew of the Earl Anglesea. He was a graduate of Oxford, where his studiousness and his piety were as admirable as they were rare. He was afterwards settled in the parish of St. James, in London, and was also appointed lecturer at St. Paul's; but, being a Nonconformist, as those ministers of the Establishment were called who refused to submit to the "Act of Uniformity," he was ejected from his preferments, and, being a gentleman of fortune, he became a leader and benefactor among his Nonconformist brethren, who, like him, had been driven from their parishes, but who, unlike him, were poor.

In the year 1689 the Rev. Samuel Wesley and Susanna Annesley were married, the age of the bride being about twenty, and that of the bridegroom about twenty-seven. For about forty years this historic household dwelt in the parish of Epworth, the father dividing his time between the care of his parish and voluminous literary labours, chiefly in the form of poetry, while the mother kept at home, guided the house, bore children—eighteen or nineteen of them in all, though only ten survived their infancy—trained them in a school of her own, and also attended to such parish duties as the frequent absence of her husband left upon her hands. Of this great family three sons and seven daughters grew up to maturity. They all possessed unusual talents, and all three of the sons became ministers of the Established Church.

It seems almost incredible that the wife of a parish clergyman upon a salary which was too small even to allow his family proper food and clothing, a lady of delicate health and of refined tastes, which were continually shocked by the rude people among whom she lived, should have been able to endure such toils and privations without losing either her spirit or her life; but in spite of all these depressing circumstances and surroundings she actually kept herself so far in advance of her college-bred sons, especially in things pertaining to the word and kingdom of God, that for years she was their acknowledged spiritual counsellor and guide. Among other helpful things she wrote for them some admirable expositions of Scripture, and of portions of the Book of Common Prayer. She grounded her children in the rudiments of learning, trained them up to be ladies and gentlemen, and, in spite of the continual misfortune which came upon the family because her husband was more of a poet and a politician than was good for him, she ever remained the same courteous, self-poised, far-seeing, courageous Christian woman.

The family of the rector was the only one in the parish that could boast of any learning, therefore if the children were not to grow up barbarians, they must, of necessity, for a long time be schooled at home. This great task fell almost wholly to the mother, and her success therein adds no little emphasis to the principles on which she conducted it. Her theory was that even in babyhood the child should be taught that one lesson which it was capable of learning, namely, submission; the next lesson was obedience, that is to say, intelligent submission to parental authority; the next lesson was piety, that is, intelligent and loving submission to God. At five years old it was her rule to beign their secular education, and from this time they studied regularly in the family school, of which Mrs. Wesley was both the teacher and mother.

A glimpse of the illiterate and ungovernable rustics among whom they lived and laboured is given in two of Mrs. Wesley's letters to her husband, while he was absent for some months in attendance upon the meeting of Convocation at London; but what is of more importance,

they contain an account of a notable effort on the part of Mrs. Wesley to promote true religion in her own family and among her neighbours by an irregular but wonderfully efficient means of grace, to wit, a private meeting at the rectory on Sunday evenings, conducted by Mrs. Wesley herself.

The curate who assisted the rector in the duties of his two small parishes, Epworth, and Wroote, was, in the judgment of Mrs. Wesley, unable to edify her husband's people, and, seeing the attendance at church fall off, she commenced to hold private meetings for her own family and such others as chose to attend. These little services were similar to those conducted at the parish church, consisting of portions of the service from the Prayer Book, and a sermon read by Mrs. Wesley.

Not wishing to trespass upon her husband's rights by holding religious services in his parish without his consent, she wrote to him, describing their little meetings, and mentioned that they were evidently doing the people much good. Mr. Wesley objected to this singular proceeding, and suggested that, to avoid the scandal of having a sermon read in public by a woman, she should find some man to read it. Mrs. Wesley replied: "As for your proposal of letting some other person read, alas! you do not consider what a people these are. I do not think one man among them could read a sermon without spelling a good part of it out. And how would that edify the rest?"

In relation to her husband's objection on the ground of her sex, she replied: "As I am a *woman*, so I am also *mistress* of a large family. And though the superior charge of the souls contained in it lies upon *you*, as head of the family and as their *minister*, yet in your absence I cannot but look upon every soul you leave under my care as a talent committed to me under trust by the great Lord of all the families of heaven and earth."

When the attendance at the little meetings at the parsonage had increased to between two and three hundred, the stupid curate, jealous of the woman for having a larger congregation than he could draw at the parish church, wrote to his rector, complaining of this disorderly assembly—this

conventicle,* as irregular religious services were spitefully called—and Mr. Wesley, whose high-church notions always lay near the surface, at once wrote to his wife, desiring her to suspend her meetings.

In reply Mrs. Wesley gives the following account of how she came to hold the meetings :—

“Soon after you went to London, Emily [one of her daughters] found in your study an account of the Danish missionaries, which, having never seen, I ordered her to read to me. I was never, I think, more affected with anything than with the relation of their travels, and was exceedingly pleased with the noble design they were engaged in. Their labours refreshed my soul beyond measure, and I could not forbear spending good part of that evening in praising and adoring the Divine goodness for inspiring those men with such ardent zeal for His glory, that they were willing to hazard their lives and all that is esteemed dear to men in this world to advance the honour of their Master, Jesus.

“For several days I could think or speak of little else. At last it came into my mind : Though I am not a *man* nor a *minister* of the Gospel, and so cannot be employed in such a worthy employment as they were, yet if my heart were sincerely devoted to God, and if I were inspired with a true zeal for His glory, and did really desire the salvation of souls, I might do somewhat more than I do. I thought I might live in a more exemplary manner in some things. I might pray more for the people, and speak with more warmth to those with whom I have an opportunity of conversing.

“However, I resolved to begin with my own children ; and accordingly I proposed and observed the following method : I take such a proportion of time as I can best spare every night to discourse with each child, by itself, on something that relates to its principal concerns. On Monday I talk with Molly ; on Tuesday with Hetty ; Wednesday with

* The famous “Conventicle Act” was passed by the British Parliament in 1664. It forbade the assembly of more than five persons besides the resident members of a family for any religious purpose not according to the Book of Common Prayer. Mrs. Wesley’s conventicle was, however, strictly according to that book, for she used no other service than that laid down in it.

Nancy ; Thursday with 'Jackey;' ["Jackey" Wesley ! who, since that day, ever conceived of John Wesley as a boy ?] Friday with Patty ; Saturday with Charles ; and with Emily and Sukey together on Sunday.

"With those few neighbours who then came to me I discoursed more fully and affectionately than before. I chose the best and most awakening sermons we had, and I spent time with them in such exercises. Since this our company has increased every night, for I dare deny none that asks admittance. Last Sunday I believe we had above two hundred, and yet many went away for want of room.

"But I never durst positively presume to hope that God would make use of *me* as an instrument in doing good ; the furthest I durst go was—It may be : who can tell ?"

After mentioning the good which had been done—among other things, that the meeting had wonderfully conciliated the minds of the people toward their pastor and his family, so that they could now live in peace among them—Mrs. Wesley closes with these wifely and Christian sentences :—

"If you do, after all, think fit to dissolve this assembly, do not tell me that you *desire me* to do it, for that will not satisfy my conscience. But send me your *positive command* in such *full and express terms* as may absolve me from all guilt and punishment for neglecting this opportunity of doing good, when you and I shall appear before the great and awful tribunal of our Lord Jesus Christ."

Such dutiful words from his wife and parishioner, which at the same time brought the rector face to face with God, and challenged him to exercise his right and power with the same obedient heart toward his superior as that she held towards hers, seems to have given a new turn to the argument, and to have left the victory with the woman ; for we hear nothing more of the rector's objections, and "The Society," as Mrs. Wesley named her assembly, continued its meetings until the rector's return.

The sharpness and tact of this lady is suggested by her statement that her "conventicles" had been the means of establishing peaceful relations between the family of the rector and the people of the parish. This was touching her husband in a vital spot, for his political partisanship had

kept the parish in a ferment of sullen ugliness which sometimes broke out into open violence.

The bitterness of the quarrels between the two factions into which the parish and the kingdom were divided can hardly be appreciated at the present day. The reigning King was William III., Prince of Orange, who, with his wife, Mary, the eldest daughter of King James II., had come over from the Dutch Netherlands at the invitation of the leaders of the Protestant party in England, and possessed himself of the throne which James, on account of his tyranny in the interests of the Papists, had been compelled to abdicate.

James II. was now dead, and the Papist party in England, called Jacobites, claimed to hold allegiance to his son, known in history as the “Young Pretender,” in whose interest they were continually plotting and planning for another revolution. The Epworth rector was a firm supporter of William and Mary; but his wife, although as good a Protestant as himself, did not believe in the legitimacy of their title, though she prudently kept her opinion to herself.

It is related, on what authority I know not, that one day, at family worship, the rector noticed that his wife did not say “Amen” in the proper place after the form of prayer for the king and royal family, and when the service was over he straightway inquired the reason.

“I do not believe in the title of the Prince of Orange,” said Mrs. Wesley. This raised the patriotic wrath of her husband, who left his family and his parish, and remained away from them for a considerable time, till Queen Anne, another daughter of the exiled James II., came to the throne, in whose title both the husband and the wife believed; whereupon the family was once more united.

If the learned and pious rector of the parish could make such an exhibition of temper over a difference of political opinion in his own household, what might not be expected of the rabble in the wild excitements of festivals and elections?

The election for the county of Lincoln in May, 1705, was very bitter and exciting. Mr. Samuel Wesley, with more valour than discretion, entered warmly into the contest in support of the candidate of the Orangemen, who was, never-

theless, defeated ; and, on his return from the polling-place at the county-seat, the Epworth Jacobites celebrated their victory by raising a mob, which surrounded the rectory and kept up a din of drums, shouts, noise of fire-arms, and such-like, till after midnight. The next evening one of the mob, passing the yard where the rector's children were playing, cried out, "O ye devils! we will come and turn ye all out of doors a-begging, shortly;" a threat which must have had a strange significance to the Wesleys, whose fathers had suffered that identical outrage at the hands of the Church to which the rector was now devoting his tongue and his pen. It would have been "an eye for an eye" if the Jacobites had been able to execute their threat by means of another revolution ; but as they were not, they kept up an infamous style of persecution, stabbing the rector's cows, cutting off a leg of his dog, withholding his tithes, arresting and thrusting him into jail for small debts, and finally, after one or two unsuccessful attempts, actually burning the rectory to the ground, and fulfilling their threat of turning him and his family out of doors.

This last event occurred when his son John was about six years old. In the dead of a winter's night the father was awakened by the fire coming into his chamber through the thatched roof, and, hastily arousing his family, they fled downstairs, and with great difficulty escaped with their lives. By some mischance little John was left behind, fast asleep ; but being awakened, he sprang to the window and began to cry for help. It was too late ; the house was filled with smoke and flame ; there was not time to fetch a ladder, and the frantic father tried in vain to ascend the stairs, but they were already too far gone to support his weight ; and, half dead with suffocation and frantic with distress, he fell on his knees and commended his poor lost boy to God. But meanwhile a stout man had placed himself against the wall of the house, and another had climbed upon his shoulders, and little Jack, leaping into his arms, was rescued out of the very jaws of the flame. The next instant the whole blazing mass of the roof fell in.

This fire occurred in the year 1709. The letters of Mrs. Wesley to her husband, above quoted, bear the dates of

February 6th and 12th, 1712, whereby it would appear that the wrath of their enemies had followed them year after year until, in the absence of the rector, his wife, under the blessing of God, so established her influence with the people as to bring them in crowds to the rectory for prayer and instruction, thus becoming the real preacher of the Gospel of peace; after which time there is no further record of ill-will on the part of the Epworth people toward their pastor or his family.

John Wesley, in after years, was always deeply affected by this narrow escape from so terrible a death, and on the margin of a picture which was painted to commemorate the event he wrote the significant words: “IS NOT THIS A BRAND PLUCKED FROM THE BURNING?”

The notable success of Mrs. Wesley’s “Society,” as appears from her letter, above quoted, in harmonizing her husband’s parish, after years of such confusion and violence, was an argument in favour of her course which could not be overthrown. It was evident that the Head of the church was her patron and defender; and, what is especially praiseworthy, she understood how to use the fact of her wonderful success without descending to spiteful personalities in her discussions with her husband, or even abating one jot of the wifely duty and respect which she owed to him. John Wesley was afterward distinguished for his almost inimitable skill as a logician, and one who could win a victory in a debate with fewer words and in better temper than any other man of his time. Is it not plain that this amiable sharpness and this logical power were among his birth inheritances from his admirable mother?

The father of the Wesleys was a poet, and, according to his theory, poetry and poverty naturally went hand in hand. His first curacy in London yielded him only thirty pounds a year, but to this he added thirty pounds more by his literary work, and on this slender income he married Susan Annesley—one of the most sensible things recorded of him—and lived in lodgings until he received the “living” of South Ormsby, worth about fifty pounds a year.

In 1693 he published the first of his large poetic works, entitled “The Life of Our Blessed Lord and Saviour Jesus

Christ ; An Heroic Poem in Ten Books ; Dedicated to Her Most Sacred Majesty [Queen Mary] ; Attempted by Samuel Wesley, Rector of South Ormsby, in the County of Lincoln." This poem, however valueless in itself, earned for him the favour of his queen, who the next year returned his compliment by conferring on him the living of Epworth, and afterward that of Wroote, a poor little village a few miles distant, both together worth about two hundred and fifty pounds a year. These livings he held until his death ; which event occurred on the 25th of April, 1735, in the seventy-second year of his age and in the thirty-ninth year of his service as rector of the parish of Epworth.

The Rev. Samuel Wesley is entitled to no small honour for being one of the first men in England to perceive the opportunity and duty of carrying the Gospel into foreign parts. He even wrote out a plan for a great system of British missionary colonies or settlements in India, China, Abyssinia, and in the islands of St. Helena, St. Thomas, etc., which plan was approved by the Bishop of York ; but for want of missionary spirit among the English clergy this scheme, which Adam Clarke declares was such as might easily have been carried into execution, was suffered to fall to the ground, but not to perish ; for his sons, John and Charles, inherited his missionary zeal, and their labours, with God's blessing, have resulted in a scheme of evangelization which has belted the earth with missionary circuits and stations.

With the other members of the Wesley family this volume has little concern. Samuel, the eldest son, became a learned and respectable minister in the Established Church, in which capacity he thought himself called upon to protest against the extravagances of his younger brothers. Of the daughters, the most of whom grew up to be brilliant and talented women, those who care to know more can find what little there is on record in Dr. Adam Clarke's "Wesley Family."

At the age of eleven, "Jackey" Wesley, after five years' tuition in the home school taught by his mother, which was by far the best institution of learning he ever attended, was placed at the Charter House School in London.

In this school the law of the strongest prevailed. All sorts of petty tyrannies were practised by the big boys upon

the little ones, and “Jackey” Wesley was no exception to their rule. The regular rations issued to the boys included meat as well as bread, but the big boys, like so many big dogs, would pounce upon the little chaps as they came from the cook’s house with their rations in their hands, and rob them of their meat, thus forcing them to become vegetarians in spite of themselves, until they became strong enough to fight for their meat, and later on for that of their juniors also.

Two years later his younger brother Charles was sent to school at Westminster, where his brother Samuel was one of the ushers, as certain of the younger assistant teachers were called, and who paid the cost of his younger brother’s course of study. Little Charles was a spirited lad, well knit, active, and afraid of nothing, which qualities not only made him a favourite—for boys are always hero-worshippers—but gained him the title of “captain of the school.” His leadership, however, was of a different sort from that which would have led him to rob his inferiors, cringe to his superiors, and fight his equals; he had an heroic spirit, and was as generous as he was brave.

Dr. Smith, in his admirable “History of Wesleyan Methodism,” mentions a case in point:—“There was a Scotch laddie at school, whose ancestors had taken sides with the Pretender, as the papist claimant to the throne was called, and who, in consequence, was greatly persecuted by the other boys; but the ‘captain’ took him under his own special charge, defended him, fought for him, and saved him from what would otherwise have been a life of intolerable misery. This lad was James Murray, afterward the great Baron Mansfield, Lord Chief Justice of England.”

CHAPTER II.

THE HOLY CLUB.

IN the year 1720, John Wesley, then a youth of seventeen, was admitted to Christ Church College, Oxford, to which college his brother Charles followed him six years after.

The excellent use he had made of his time at the Charter House gained for him a high position as a student at Oxford, and he soon became quite famous for his learning in the classics, and especially for his skill in logic. But Christ Church was the most aristocratic, fashionable, and luxurious of all the Oxford colleges, whose chief function was to give a mild scholastic flavour to the manners of the prospective noblemen of the realm, and was therefore ill adapted to train a religious leader for his work.

On his arrival he was surprised at the extent to which all manner of dissipations, among which drinking and gambling were only the least disgraceful, prevailed at this central seat of British learning. For a time he was carried by the current out of his moral latitude, but not for long. Ever since his rescue from the flames his mother had felt impressed to devote herself with special care to the training of this son, toward whom there is in the family records a slight tinge of favouritism, and the suggestion of a presentiment in the mind of that good woman of certain great things which lay before him.

Although John was saved through his mother's teachings and in answer to her prayers from falling into outward sins, the religious nature which he possessed did not very strongly manifest itself until some time in his twenty-second year. Six years at the Charter House, with its classics and its ruffianism, and five years at Christ Church College, with its aristocratic iniquity, were not calculated to keep alive the

memory of the godly training which he received at home. He confesses himself to have lost his childish religion, and to have become “a sinner,” but not to any desperate degree; for the heavy sinning at Oxford implied heavy expense, and young Wesley was a poor man’s son, who could not afford to be fashionably wicked, even if he had possessed that desire. We hear now and then of his debts, a frequent topic in the correspondence of the Wesley family; but, on the whole, his poverty proved his protection, and helped to develop the grace of frugality for which he afterward became conspicuous.

In January, 1725, being then twenty-two years of age, he writes to his father for advice as to whether he should apply for ordination in the Established Church; he, like all the rest of the male Wesleys, taking to the priesthood with an hereditary instinct; and in the correspondence there is a hint that he had been the subject of some spiritual awakening, and was looking toward a clerical life, not only as a means of living, but as a safeguard against habits of sin in which he was fearful of becoming confirmed.

His father replies that there is no harm in trying to obtain holy orders with a view to a respectable livelihood, “but that the principal spring and motive must certainly be the glory of God and the service of the Church in the edification of our neighbour. And woe to him who, with any meaner leading view, attempts so sacred a work.”

One of the most successful educators in America has said that “one great want of our times is a society for the suppression of useless knowledge.” Mrs. Wesley in her day was evidently of the same opinion. With the constant example before her of a man of learning and genius wasting his lifetime in “beating rhymes,” delving in Oriental literature, to the neglect of the souls in his parish, turning the Gospel into an “heroic poem,” and grinding out pious or classic platitudes in verse on every sort of occasion, appears to have been a powerful motive with her in her efforts to prevent her sons from “engaging in trifling studies.” Fortunately for John, he eschewed the counsel of his father and followed the advice of his mother, plunging into the study of “practical divinity,” including such books as Thomas à Kempis on

“The Imitation of Christ,” Taylor’s “Holy Living and Dying,” etc.; and in the following September he was ordained a deacon in the Established Church.

In 1726 he succeeded in obtaining one of the twelve fellowships of Lincoln College, one of the smallest, poorest, and most scholarly of the nineteen colleges which are comprised in the University of Oxford, and thither he at once removed, glad to escape from his surroundings at Christ Church, and happy now in having a permanent means of support which would permit him to devote his life to the duties of a Christian minister and scholar.

Some of the fellowships in the rich colleges at Oxford yielded an annual income of six or seven hundred pounds; those at Lincoln College, however, were far less valuable, but ample for the supply of his wants.

The position of Fellow was both honourable and easy. Its duties consisted in residing in the college, taking such part as might be agreeable in the general management of its affairs, and helping to maintain the college dignity by a life of learned leisure; it was, in a word, a scholastic sinecure, requiring some distinguished merit to obtain it, and continuing until death, marriage, or the presentation to some fat living. For a man of Wesley’s turn of mind this was indeed a paradise. No more debts to haunt him, no more burdens to lay upon his poor father, an assured position among English scholars, and a comfortable home for life in the midst of the best helps to learning then to be found in the world. His ordination gave him additional respectability and influence; it would also secure for him a chance of succeeding to some of the small livings in the gift of the college, provided he wished to remain a Fellow, or perhaps open up his way to an ample benefice in case he wished to become rector of a parish, and make a start in the race for episcopal honours.

There was great rejoicing at the Epworth Rectory over the news that “Jackey” had gained a fellowship at Oxford. The event seemed to perpetuate the clerical and scholarly honours of the family, and would add to their income, if in no other way, by relieving them of the support of this member of the family. Now perhaps mother and daughter might clothe them-

selves decently as became their station, which they hitherto had been prevented from doing, not so much by the smallness of their income as by its unfortunate management in the hands of the poet parson ; and the father might now occasionally call on his clerical son to assist him in the duties of his parish, which, by reason of his literary schemes, had sometimes been sadly neglected.

In 1727 the Rev. John Wesley took his degree of Master of Arts, having already been honoured by an election to the office of “Lecturer in Greek,” and “Moderator of the Classes.” In 1728 he was ordained priest or presbyter by Dr. Potter, the Bishop of Oxford, though there is no evidence of his intention to devote himself to the pastorate.

His position as Greek lecturer attracted to him certain persons, who, like himself, read the Greek Testament for devotion, as well as a number of private pupils who sought his assistance in that department of learning. In Hebrew, too, Wesley was one of the best scholars of his time, he having commenced the study of it when little more than a child. Concerning his office of “Moderator of the Classes,” he says : “For several years I was moderator in the disputations which were held six times a week at Lincoln College in Oxford. I could not avoid acquiring hereby some degree of expertness in arguing, and especially in pointing out well-covered and plausible fallacies. I have since found abundant reason to praise God for giving me this honest art. By this, when men have hedged me in by what they called demonstrations, I have been many times able to dash them in pieces ; in spite of all its covers, to touch the very point where the fallacy lay, and it flew open in a moment.” From all this it is evident that Wesley was a distinguished scholar at Oxford, and even that he had achieved all these scholastic honours before he was twenty-five years of age.

His brother Charles had now been a student at Christ Church for more than two years, the first of which he spent in anything else except study. When reproved by his elder brother for his folly, he would reply : “What ! would you have me to be a saint all at once ?” But soon after John had gone down to Epworth to assist his father, Charles became deeply serious. In a letter to his brother, asking

such advice as he had so lately scouted, he says: "It is owing in a great measure to somebody's prayers (my mother's, most likely) that I am come to think as I do, for I cannot tell how or where I awoke out of my lethargy, only it was not long after you went away."

Charles' piety first showed itself in honest, hard work with his books, then in attendance upon the sacrament of the Lord's Supper every week; and, being now desirous of doing something more by way of working out his salvation, he persuaded two or three of his young friends to join him in a systematic effort to attain a state of absolute holiness. They adopted a system of rules for holy living, apportioned their time exactly among their various scholarly and religious duties, allowing as little as possible for sleeping and eating, and as much as possible for devotion. It was this regularity of life that earned them the name of "Methodists," a term derived from the Greek word *μεθοδικος*, which signifies "One who follows an exact method;" but John Wesley subsequently turned the tables upon his adversaries in a dictionary which he published for the "People called Methodists," in which he defined the word "Methodist" as "One who lives according to the method laid down in the holy Scriptures."

It thus appears that the Holy Club was organized by Charles Wesley while his elder brother was absent at Epworth; but when John returned to Oxford, Charles and his two friends Kirkham and Morgan received him with great delight, and, by reason of his superior age and acquirements, he at once became the head of their little fraternity.

His reputation as a scholar brought him certain young gentlemen who desired his personal instruction, and thus he became a private tutor as well as a college lecturer. Some of these people became interested in the plan of holy living which the members of the club were so enthusiastically pursuing, and were permitted to attend its meetings as visitors, in the hope that they would at length become members.

John Wesley's views of his duty to his pupils appear in one of his addresses to the tutors of the University, who were, no doubt, amazed that this man, so much their junior in years, and so much inferior to many of them in personal rank and

clerical dignity, should venture to challenge their methods of ministry and offer such stinging advice.

“Ye venerable men,” he exclaims, “who are more especially called to form the tender minds of youth, to dispel thence the shades of ignorance and error, and train them up to be wise unto salvation, are you filled with the Holy Ghost? Do you continually remind those under your care that the one rational end of all our studies is to know, love, and serve the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom He has sent? Do you inculcate upon them, day by day, that love that alone never faileth, (whereas, whether there be tongues, they shall fail, or philosophical knowledge, it shall vanish away,) and that without love all learning is but splendid ignorance, pompous folly, and vexation of spirit? . . . Let it not be said that I speak here as if all under your care were intended to be clergymen. Not so: I only speak as if they were all intended to become Christians.”*

Besides their frequent meetings for the study of the Greek Testament and devotional exercises, the Wesleys and their two friends began a systematic visitation of the poor and the sick, and presently extended their charity to the poor debtors in Bocardo. This “Bocardo” was a room over the north gate of the ancient city wall, at that time in use as the debtors’ prison at Oxford.†

To this work they devoted two or three hours every week; though before entering upon such a novel enterprise they thought it best to consult Mr. Samuel Wesley about it, who gave his approbation, provided the jailor was satisfied with it, and the bishop of the diocese had no objections.

It was, doubtless, a new experience for the Bishop of Oxford to have a fellow of Lincoln College and two or three students of Christ’s Church asking his permission to do any such undignified thing as to visit the poor, and preach the Gospel to the miserable wretches in the debtors’ prison; but, finding they were really intent upon this holy work, he

* “Wesleys Works,” vol. i., page 42.

† It was from this place that Archbishop Cranmer was led forth to martyrdom, after having been led up to the top of the tower of St. Michael’s Church adjoining the prison, to witness the burning of Ridley and Latimer, in order that the sight of their sufferings might move him to recant.

graciously gave his consent, and thus the Holy Club entered upon its first apostolic ministry.

Like the man in the Gospel who was so well satisfied with himself, the members of the Holy Club fasted twice in the week ; they denied themselves all luxuries and many comforts that they might have more money to give to the poor ; they kept the forty days of Lent so strictly as to be half-starved when the great annual fast was over ; they practised all the rules for the attainment of holiness that they could find in the Book of Common Prayer, "*De Imitatione Christi*," Law's "Sermons," Taylor's "Holy Living and Dying," "The Whole Duty of Man," etc., they sought for separation from the world, and managed to live, in the midst of the teeming folly and dissipation of Oxford, a life of almost monastic severity.

There is always something attractive in the life of a devotee, not always in spite of, but sometimes because of, the privations and sufferings which he endures. Oxford laughed at the members of the Holy Club ; but among the young men and young women also who lived in the town and observed the sanctity of the lives of these four men there were those who were attracted rather than repelled. In 1732 the membership of the club was strengthened by the addition of Messrs. Ingham, Broughton, Clayton, Gambold, and Hervey, the last name being familiar as that of the author of the well-known "Meditations." At one time the list of membership increased to twenty-seven, most of whom were members of the different colleges, or private pupils of John Wesley ; and Mr. Clayton, in a letter to Wesley, gives us a glimpse of one of the lady members, whom he mentions as "poor Miss Potter" (could it have been the daughter of the bishop?) and of whom he says : "I wonder not that she has fallen ;" that is, fallen from the high ritualistic practices and painful devotions of the Holy Club.

No wonder that some of the members should backslide when the self-mortifications enjoined by their rules were such as to earn the censure of good men as well as the ridicule of bad men, when the newspapers joined in the popular cry against them, when a mob would collect at the door of St. Mary's Church, where the Methodists were in the habit of receiving the Lord's Supper every week, and shamefully

entreat them as they passed in, when certain Church authorities ridiculed and denounced them as "enthusiasts," "fanatics," "papists," "supererogation men," etc., the latter name being flung at them because they insisted on keeping all the fasts prescribed in the Book of Common Prayer, sometimes with such vigour as to leave them scarce strength enough to walk.

As the spiritual head of the club, the youthful Rev. John Wesley published a book of prayers of his own composition for their private use. That at this time he held to auricular confession is proved by the following quotation from a sharp letter written him by his sister Emily, in reply to one of his own :—

"To lay open the state of my soul to you or any of our clergy is what I have no inclination to at present, and I believe I never shall. I shall not put my conscience under the direction of mortal man frail as myself. To my own Master I stand or fall. Nay, I scruple not to say that all such desire in you or any other ecclesiastic seems to me like Church tyranny and assuming to yourselves a dominion over your fellow-creatures which God never designed you to hold."

The extent to which the success of the Holy Club depended on the personal magnetism of John Wesley is shown by the fact that while he was absent on a visit to his old home at Epworth, some time in the year 1733, its membership dwindled from twenty-seven to only five, a reduction scarcely to be lamented, for a more perfect specimen of Pharisaism the Christian world has rarely seen; even its own members in after years confessed it to have been a futile effort to save themselves, instead of coming to the Saviour set forth in the Word of God.

It was during the decline and fall of the Holy Club that George Whitefield was added to its number; indeed, he appears to have been its last as well as its most notable accession. This greatest preacher of modern times, if not of all times, by whose marvellous eloquence and spiritual power the Methodist revival was at first chiefly promoted, and who afterward for a short time divided with Wesley the honours of Methodist leadership, was born in the city of Gloucester,

England, December 16, 1714. His father and mother kept the Bell Inn, but his father died when he was only two years old, and his mother, having but a mean opinion of her business, carefully kept her son from all connection with it until the failing fortunes of the family caused by her second and unhappy marriage made it needful for him to leave his school and take the place of pot-boy of the Bell. This was in his fifteenth year.

In a very frank account of himself, which Mr. Whitefield published when he was about twenty-six years old, he says: "I can truly say I was froward from my mother's womb. However the young man in the Gospel might boast that he had kept all the commandments from his youth, with shame and confusion of face I confess that I have broken them all from my youth. Whatever foreseen fitness for salvation others may talk of or glory in, I disclaim any such thing. If I trace myself from my cradle to my manhood, I can see nothing in me but a fitness to be damned."* Yet he says he had some early convictions of sin; that he was fond of being a clergyman; used frequently to "imitate ministers reading prayers;" and that of the money which he used to steal from his mother for cakes and fruits and play-house tickets, he was accustomed to give a portion to the poor!

His talent for dramatic performances was noticed by the master of the school, who composed some small plays for him to act, sometimes even in a female character, and dressed accordingly, of which he declares himself to be particularly ashamed, and of which he sets down his opinion thus: "And here I cannot observe with too much concern of mind how this way of training up youth has a natural tendency to debauch the mind, to raise ill passions, and to stuff the memory with things as contrary to the Gospel of Jesus Christ as light to darkness, as heaven to hell!"

While he was serving as tapster at the Bell, he was still dreaming of the life of a parson, and even composed two or three sermons, though he had no one to preach them to; and, indeed, he was far enough from being fit to preach in

* Tyerman's "Life of George Whitefield." This admirable work is the chief authority for what here appears concerning this great preacher.

any other respect except in his talent as a speaker. He was often anxious about his soul, and would sit up far into the night reading his Bible, thinking over his sins, and wishing he could go to Oxford and study for the holy ministry, a wish which, however wild it seemed at the time, was not long after gratified. Of this change from tapster to theologian he writes as follows :—

"After I had continued about a year in this servile employment, my mother was obliged to leave the inn. My brother, who was brought up for the business, married, whereupon all was made over to him, and I being accustomed to the house, it was agreed that I should remain as an assistant. But God's thoughts were not as our thoughts. It happened that my sister-in-law and I could by no means agree. I was much to blame, yet I used to retire and weep before the Lord, little thinking that God by this means was forcing me out from the public business, and calling me from drawing wine for drunkards to draw water out of the wells of salvation for the refreshment of His spiritual Israel."

It appears that during a visit to his brother at Bristol he had been powerfully wrought upon by the Holy Spirit, of which experience he says : "Here God was pleased to give me great foretastes of His love, and fill me with such unspeakable raptures, particularly once in St. John's Church, that I was carried out beyond myself. I felt great hungerings and thirstings after the blessed sacrament, and wrote many letters to my mother, telling her I would never go into the public employment again ;" but from this state of grace he fell on returning to Gloucester; and being without employment, having forsworn the dram-selling, he fell in with idle companions, by whom he was led into secret vice, and almost into open apostasy from God, though it was impossible for him to be an infidel, toward which abyss he was led by the ideas and influence of some of his Gloucester companions.

At eighteen years of age Whitefield was admitted to Pembroke College, Oxford, and, being a polite and ready servitor, which trade he had learned at the Bell Inn, he at once became a favourite with the gentlemen of his college, who gave him all the patronage he could attend to, and thus placed him in a position of comparative independence.

As might be supposed, this young pietist suffered no little persecution for refusing to join in the "excess of riot" of some of his college acquaintances; but nothing could shake him. He had also heard of the Methodists and their Holy Club, and greatly desired to be among them, but his poverty, his modesty, and his youth prevented him from presuming to seek acquaintance among persons so far above him. It happened, however, that he fell in with Mr. Charles Wesley, who was pleased with him, invited him to breakfast, introduced him to his brother John, who also took a kind interest in the lad, gave him private instruction in things of religion, and, greatly to his delight, introduced him to their little fraternity.

That work of the Holy Spirit upon the soul of the believer in Christ, which is now so well understood among Methodists, was at this time almost unheard of, even in the orthodox communion of the English Church. To be converted signified, in the doctrinal teachings of English pulpits, a gradual process by which, often through very slow degrees, a baptized member of the Church might, somehow or other, come into a salvable condition, at which, however, there was no expectation of his arriving until the hour and article of death. Even to this day a minority only of the English clergy believe, experience, and preach instantaneous conversion; and during the progress of the recent revivals in that kingdom, under the leadership of the American evangelists, certain of the clergy made bitter attacks upon the movement, denouncing it, among other reasons, because it gave so much prominence to the idea of "instantaneous conversion."

In the awful struggles of soul through which Whitefield passed, his mind was so tormented that he could not perform his college duties, and for a time such was his behaviour that he was actually believed to have become insane.

"Near five or six weeks," he writes, "I was fighting with my corruptions, and did little else besides kneeling down by my bedside, feeling, as it were, a pressure upon my body, as well as an unspeakable oppression of mind, yet offering up my soul to God to do with me as it pleased Him. It was now suggested to me that Jesus Christ was among the wild beasts when He was tempted, and that I ought to

follow His example; and being willing, as I thought, to imitate Jesus Christ, after supper I went out into Christ Church Walk, near our college, and continued in silent prayer under one of the trees for near two hours. The night being stormy, it gave me awful thoughts of the day of judgment. The next night I repeated the same exercise at the same place. . . . Soon after this the holy season of Lent came on, which our friends kept very strictly, eating no flesh during the six weeks except on Saturdays and Sundays. I abstained frequently on Saturdays also, and ate nothing on the other days, except Sundays, but sage tea without sugar and coarse bread. I constantly walked out in the cold mornings till part of one of my hands was quite black. This, with my continued abstinence and inward conflicts, at length so emaciated my body that at Passion-week, finding I could scarce creep upstairs, I was obliged to inform my kind tutor of my situation, who immediately sent a physician to me. This caused no small triumph among the collegians, who began to cry out, 'What is his fasting come to now?'

It was during this time that John Wesley had helped him out of his despondency and advised him to continue his performance of the external duties of religion. At a time when he was tempted to abandon them and give over the struggle in despair, Charles Wesley lent him a book to read, entitled "The Life of God in the Soul of Man," from which he learned that "a man may go to church, say his prayers, receive the sacrament, and yet not be a Christian;" and this book, through the blessing of the Divine Spirit, was the means of bringing him into the experience of saving grace. "Holding the book in my hand," he says, "I thus addressed the God of heaven and earth: 'Lord, if I am not a Christian, for Jesus Christ's sake show me what Christianity is, that I may not be damned at last.' I read a little further, and discovered that they who know anything of religion know it is a vital union with the Son of God—Christ found in the heart. Oh, what a ray of Divine light did then break in upon my soul!

"I know the place: it may, perhaps, be superstitious, but whenever I go to Oxford I cannot help running to the spot

where Jesus Christ first revealed Himself to me, and gave me a new birth." This was in the year 1735, when Whitefield was in his twenty-first year.

The decided character of Whitefield's testimony concerning his conversion is worthy of special attention, occurring as it does at a time when the doctrine of Assurance of Faith was very rarely heard. Whitefield was saved so gloriously, that he had no difficulty in recognizing the fact. Is it true, then, that the reason why so many professing Christians are in doubt about their experience of saving grace is to be found in the fact that their experience of grace really amounts to so little? Yea or nay, this certainly is true, that all the great souls whom God has set to be leaders in His Church have passed through the same deep convictions, and fought the same desperate battles with the powers of darkness, as those recorded of this Apollos of the eighteenth century. They have not only been baptized with water, but also with the Holy Ghost and with fire.

It was three years after this that the Wesleys came into the experience of the new birth. They approached it with scholarly research, Whitefield with absolute desperation; they were gentlemen, he was only a poor, despised servitor, who felt himself unworthy of their notice; they were teachers and in holy orders, he was a poor, broken-hearted devotee, lost in the abyss of his own depravity, and only crying out for God; they were Pharisees, he was a publican—and of course he came into the kingdom long before them.

The doctrines of the Holy Club were orthodox. They were the doctrines of the Book of Common Prayer, flavoured with mysticism and somewhat tainted with popery. John Wesley, as has been seen, was instructed by his mother in the theology of his dissenting grandfather, Dr. Annesley, as well as in that of the Established Church, of which his father was a champion. Besides these, Mrs. Wesley held certain views of her own; as, for instance, she rejected the doctrine of unconditional election of a part of the human race to eternal glory, and reprobation of the remainder to eternal woe, and taught her son to believe that this inference of the Westminster doctors was a slander against the justice of God. The whole Wesley family accepted the Apostles'

Creed as the best statement of theoretical religion ; so also did the Holy Club ; and they strove after inward holiness by the practice of outward morality and by the help of all the means of grace of which they had any knowledge.

What was the fault of all this ?

None at all ; it was good as far as it went ; but it was only one side of the subject—the human side ; it was an attempt to train and develop the old nature into a state of holiness, instead of seeking for the new nature which is born of God ; it was trying to turn the carnal mind from its enmity toward God, instead of displacing it with the mind that was in Christ ; it was cultivating the corrupt tree so as to make it bring forth good fruit ; it was going about to establish their own righteousness, whereby they overlooked the righteousness that is by faith.

Not long after his conversion, Whitefield, prostrated in body by his terrible struggles of soul, left Oxford for a visit to his home in Gloucester. Of the other members, Gambold was ordained and settled as a curate in the little village of Stanton-Harcourt ; Broughton went up to London as curate at The Tower ; Ingham took a curacy in Essex ; the two Wesleys went up to Westminster, where their brother Samuel resided ; Hervey went home to Hardingstone, and for a season Oxford was clear of its Methodists.

Had the fire burned out ?

Not at all. God was only scattering the brands, that He might set the whole kingdom in a blaze.

CHAPTER III.

THE MISSION TO AMERICA.

IT was John Wesley's intention, after he had obtained his Fellowship at Lincoln College, to spend his life at Oxford in efforts to save his soul. This thought was all the time uppermost in his mind. He studied the Greek and Hebrew Scriptures to save his soul; he fasted and prayed to save his soul; he preached in churches and taught in prisons to save his soul; he fed the hungry and clothed the naked to save his soul; he led a life of self-mortification, and made himself the object of ridicule and abuse, to save his soul. Poor man! He had a troublesome soul on his hands, and did not know what to do with it.

His old father, now about to die, greatly desired John to succeed him in the Epworth rectorship, but the son resisted all his fatherly entreaties on the plea that he could save his soul better at Oxford than at Epworth. His father then urged that his ordination vows made it his duty to take a parish as soon as one could be had, whereupon he yielded the point, for duty was with him the end of all argument, and applied for the Epworth living; but his overmuch severity in religion had reached the ears of certain men who had the power of influencing the appointment, and his application was refused. Now his way was clear; he could stay in Oxford, give himself up to pious studies and labours, be a Methodist of the saintliest sort, and, somehow or other, manage to save his soul.

On the 25th of April, 1735, Samuel Wesley died, and after the burial his son John went up to London, where a strange experience awaited him.

Just at this time the project of James Edward Oglethorpe (afterward General) for colonizing a crowd of poor debtors,

who by his influence had been released from the prisons of England, was receiving much attention. Those were the days of harsh government. The gallows was the penalty for petty thefts ; thousands of men in Great Britain rotted in prison for the misfortune of being poor ; a small debt was quite enough to expose a struggling debtor to the penalty of imprisonment, and an indiscreet bargain doomed many a well-meaning dupe to lifelong confinement ; for, once within the walls of a debtors' prison, a poor wretch was often as completely lost to the world as if he had been in his grave. Oglethorpe, whose attention had been attracted by this great abuse, obtained a parliamentary commission to inquire into the state of the English prisons, the result of which was that a large number of debtors were released from confinement and restored to light and liberty.

But what was to be done with these people, to whom, indeed, the prison had opened its doors, but against whom all other doors were now shut ?

There was still a small strip of sea-coast in America which had not been “granted” to anybody, bounded by the Savannah river on the north and the Altamaha on the south, and here, by royal charter, was located the colony of Georgia, the country being vested in a board of twenty-one trustees for a period of twenty-one years, “in trust for the poor.” The sum of thirty-six thousand pounds was raised by public subscription to aid this popular charity, ten thousand of it being a donation from the Bank of England, and in the month of November, 1733, the first shipload of superfluous English poverty, comprising one hundred and twenty persons, with Oglethorpe at their head, landed at the spot where now stands the beautiful city of Savannah.

The next year their numbers were increased by a company of persecuted Protestants from Salzburg in Germany, whose afflictions coming to the knowledge of the English Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts, led to the proposal to settle them also in Georgia ; which kind offer they joyfully accepted, and soon became a thriving community, fearing God and loving one another. Three other shiploads of emigrants subsequently reached the colony,

one of Scotch Highlanders, one of Moravians, while the third was a mixed multitude which had been attracted by the accounts of this open door into a new world, and with whom Oglethorpe returned a second time to America, taking with him the pious young "Fellow of Lincoln College" as their spiritual adviser.

John Wesley was sent out to Georgia by the Society above mentioned, as a kind of missionary chaplain, at a salary of £50 a year. He was accompanied by his brother, Charles Wesley, Ingham, one of the Holy Club from Oxford, and a young man named Delamotte, who had become a great admirer of Mr. Wesley, and who, against the wishes of his family, turned his back on a good business opening at home to become the servant of this missionary in the wilds of North America.

But what has changed the purpose of this Oxford devotee?

Nothing. The purpose is not changed; only the means of its accomplishment. Here are his own words relative to this momentous step out from his beloved Oxford into the western wilderness:—

→ "My chief motive is the hope of saving my own soul. I hope to learn the true sense of the Gospel by preaching it to the heathen. They have no comments to construe away the text, no vain philosophy to corrupt it, no luxurious, sensual, covetous, ambitious expounders to soften its unpleasing truths. They have no party, no interests to serve, and are therefore fit to receive the Gospel in its simplicity. They are as little children, humble, willing to learn, and eager to do the will of God."

Indeed! Fine people, those savages.

After setting forth how much easier he expects it will be for him to lead a life of sanctity in the wilderness, where most of his temptations will be removed, he continues:— "I have been a grievous sinner from my youth up and am yet laden with foolish and hurtful desires, but I am assured if I be once converted myself, God will then employ me both to strengthen my brethren and to preach His name to the Gentiles.

"I cannot hope to attain the same degree of holiness here which I may there. I shall lose nothing I desire to

keep. . . . It will be no small thing to be able, without fear of giving offence, to live on water and the fruits of the earth The pomp and show of this world have no place in the wilds of America.”

In all this ridiculous letter there is not one word about a sense of duty. So far as it is possible to gather from Wesley's own writings, he never felt that God was sending him across the sea, or that the American heathen had any claim upon him ; it was only one of his many schemes of self-mortification to help him in saving his soul.

Was it, then, a delusion of the devil ?

Judging by his ridiculous failure one might answer, Yes. Judging also by his distinguished unfitness for such a mission at this period of his life, it would be easy to reach the same conclusion.

But there is another side to the question The Reverend John Wesley is now thirty-two years old ; a man as notable for sanctity as he is eminent for learning. He is a great honour to his college, and a valuable assistant in its scholastic work. He knows more of books and less of human nature outside of Oxford than any other man whose record has come down to our times. He is a presbyter of the Church of England, on which account he claims that he belongs to a superior order of mortals, though as yet he does not think himself in a state of saving grace and has only an official ministry to offer, and so completely is his common sense blindfolded by the rituals of his Church and his own clerical pretensions, that if he is ever to amount to anything as a minister of the Gospel, those traditional bandages must be torn from his eyes.

A more remarkable mixture of learning and ignorance, of piety and pretension, of dogmatism and devotion, than that which composed the character of John Wesley at this transitional period of his life it is difficult to imagine. He is turning his back upon those surroundings and duties which are most congenial to his scholarly tastes and habits, and actually anticipating with pleasure a life among a crowd of savages. Civilization has its vices which interfere with his great desire for holiness, he therefore eagerly exchanges it for barbarism, and dreams of saving his soul with the help of

an Indian hut. He is taking his life in his hand, half expecting and wholly willing to lose it. He will preach for awhile among the colonists of Savannah till he finds how to begin his mission among the Indians, of whom he thinks as so many "little children," destitute both of opinions and character, "willing to learn, and eager to do the will of God;" and when this path opens before him he will bid adieu to the temptations of this vain and wicked world, and bury himself in the woods.

All this he deliberately chooses to do without any call of God to a missionary life, without any fitness for it except heroism, without any love for it except what results from his misapprehension of it, without any especial love for the souls to whom he proposes to minister, and without any clear sense of love for God, in whose name he is going to do it: he is simply about to make a grand experiment to see if something will not come of it that will help him to save his soul.

But if his self-appointed mission be only a piece of devout self-righteousness, he fulfils it in a manner worthy of admiration. He is travelling the wrong road, but it is a splendid sight to see how he pushes on; his zeal is not according to knowledge, but his Father in heaven understands this singular child, and is giving him a chance to toss upon the stormy bosom of the ocean, to dash his head against the trees of the wilderness, to wade through swamps, to freeze and starve, to be duped and abused, and be made the scapegoat of a scandalous quarrel, all with the evident purpose of widening the scope of his vision, driving some of the pious conceit out of him, showing him how weak and contemptible a thing is merely official religion, and, withal, of opening his understanding, through the teachings of some of the simple-minded Moravians, to that pivotal doctrine of the Wesleyan revival—the regeneration of the penitent sinner by the power of the Holy Ghost through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.

It was arranged that Charles Wesley should go out to Georgia as the Governor's secretary, and he now took orders as a clergyman that he might assist his brother in his ministry. Before starting out, the two Wesleys, Ingham, and Delamotte made a solemn agreement in writing to the effect that in

order to maintain unity among themselves no one of the four should undertake anything of importance without consulting with the other three ; that all questions should be decided by vote ; and that in case of an even division of opinion the matter after being laid before the Lord should be decided by lot.

On one occasion the ship encountered a terrible storm, and the sea broke over the deck while the Moravians were singing their evening hymn. The other passengers screamed with terror, but the Moravians calmly sang on, as if nothing had happened. After the service was over, Wesley said to one of them,—

“Were you not afraid?”

“I thank God, no,” was his reply.

“But were not your women and children afraid?”

“No. Our women and children are not afraid to die.”

This incident made a profound impression upon Wesley’s mind, for he records it in his Journal with the remark, “This is the most glorious day which I have ever seen.”

These Moravians were “regular” Christians, having the three orders of the ministry, bishops, priests, and deacons, according to the English and Romish ritual ; therefore John Wesley with a clear conscience joined in their worship of God, which he would by no means have done had they been Presbyterians, Baptists, or Quakers. They were far in advance of him in the experience of salvation, and he had the sense to see it and the humility to confess it, and also to ask advice of their chief men in respect to the work he had laid out for himself in America.

The voyage from Cowes to the Savannah River was made in fifty-seven days, during which Oglethorpe treated the missionaries with great kindness. On one occasion, when some of the officers and gentlemen on board took liberties with Wesley and his friends, Oglethorpe indignantly exclaimed, “What mean you, sirs? Do you take these gentlemen for tithe-pig parsons? They are gentlemen of learning and respectability. They are my friends, and whoever offers an affront to them insults me.” This was quite enough, and thereafter the Methodists were treated with respect.

†The remarkable powers of mind possessed by John Wesley are indicated by the following facts: There was a large number of German-speaking people among the ship's company, his Moravian friends and others, and he at once commenced the study of the German language, that he might converse with and preach to them. When he reached Savannah he discovered some Frenchmen and Italians also, and towards the close of his polyglot mission we find him publicly as well as privately instructing them all in their own tongues.

Wesley's mission opened prosperously. His census of his new parish in 1737 gives the number at five hundred and eighteen souls. The only other settlements in Georgia were the French and German villages above named, which lay four or five miles to the south-west; the little hamlet called Thunderbolt, six miles to the south-east; the Moravian town of New Ebenezer, nineteen miles distant; Darien, the settlement of the Scotch Islanders, eighty miles; and Frederica, on St. Simond's Island, a hundred miles to the south of Savannah.

But the people who smiled on him because of his friend, the Governor, soon began to frown on him because of himself. The doctrines and practices whose rigidness and severity had incensed a learned and church-going community like Oxford, were not likely to find favour among such a motley crowd as that in Oglethorpe's little domain of Georgia. He read morning and evening prayers publicly every day, preached very plain and searching sermons on Sunday, which cut to the bone, and caused a good many sinners to be "exceeding mad" against him for what they called his "satires upon particular persons." He organized another Holy Club, which met three times a week for Scripture reading, psalm-singing, and prayer, and he and young Delamotte each set up a little school.

While the revolt against his spiritual authority was gathering strength, his brother and his friend Ingham were meeting with similar trials at Frederica. The Rev. Charles began by magnifying his office and carrying out his ritualistic notions with a high hand. He also attempted the practical but impracticable office of settling the quarrels of certain scolding women, and in one way and another brought him-

self into such bad odour with these semi-barbarians, that they actually denied him a place to sleep, and he was forced to make his bed on the ground. They filled the ears of the Governor with stories against him, and in a short time the secretary was out of favour with his master, whereupon, having no visible protection, his few friends forsook him; he was even charged with mutiny, and his life became so intolerable that within three weeks after his arrival at Frederica he dispatched Ingham to Savannah for advice. The elder brother made all haste to visit the scene of hostilities, but his office as peace-maker was a sad failure; for he had only just returned to Savannah when Charles made his appearance there, having been actually put to flight by the outrageous treatment of his parishioners. The brothers then exchanged their fields of labour, but in a month and a day John Wesley also was forced to abandon his cure of souls at Frederica and to return to Savannah, having been, as he says, "betrayed, scorned, and insulted by those I had most laboured to serve."

After five months Charles Wesley returned to England to beg for reinforcements, and at the end of the first year Ingham followed him, having accomplished literally nothing of all the pious purposes with which they set out. John Wesley and his faithful Delamotte remained for another year, when they, too, were glad to escape under circumstances which his enemies for a hundred years have used to traduce Wesley's character and belittle his fame.

During the second year, in spite of the sad experience he had suffered, John Wesley kept on his course of high-church dogmatism. With him a direction set down in the Prayer Book was in those days almost as binding as a text of Scripture; and by both these books, not by either without the other, he determined to stand or fall. He insisted on baptizing infants by immersion, unless it was declared by the parents that they were too feeble to bear it; he would not allow persons to stand as godfathers or godmothers who did not certify that they had received the Holy Communion; he refused the Lord's Supper to those who did not give previous notice of their intention to present themselves; his visitation from house to house was looked upon as a systematic

espionage; and it was charged that he attempted to establish a system of confessions, fasts, and other religious mortifications, which, though well enough in accordance with the Bible and the Book of Common Prayer, were not at all agreeable to these Savannah colonists, whom their zealous minister was trying either to lead or drive into the kingdom of heaven. He rigidly excluded all dissenters from the Holy Communion until they gave up their principles and submitted to be re-baptized by him; nevertheless he received Roman Catholics as good and regular Christians, on which account his enemies denounced him as a Romanist in disguise.

In Georgia, says Tyerman, "Wesley was treating dissenters with the supercilious tyranny of a high-church bigot." He watched his flock too closely to suit their notions of liberty; he used his influence with the Governor to have strict laws enacted for the promotion of outward morality; and to such a degree did he cross the tastes and temper of the motley crowd, that certain of the baser sort were actually ready to kill him. One stout virago invited him into her house, and having overpowered him—for Wesley was a small weak man—she cut off all the long auburn locks from one side of his head, leaving the other side untouched; and the persecuted man, by way of making the most of his sufferings for the truth's sake, actually appeared in the pulpit with his hair in this one-sided condition.

In January, 1737, Wesley and Delamotte paid another visit to Frederica, where they arrived after having lost their way in the woods, waded breast deep in swamps, and slept on the ground in their wet clothes, which were frozen stiff in the morning. But the people of that wretched settlement were as untractable as ever, and, after spending some twenty days among them, during which his life was repeatedly threatened, Wesley left the place for ever, and returned to face his enemies at Savannah, who were preparing a long indictment against him.

To make matters worse, Wesley fell in love with a beautiful and accomplished young lady, who had first sought his help in learning the French language, and later, his instruction in religion. She was the niece of the wife of one Thomas Causton, an unscrupulous adventurer who had so far won the

good opinion of Governor Oglethorpe as to be made chief magistrate of the colony, which office he administered with the most ridiculous state and dignity.

For a time the affairs of the two young people went on smoothly enough. Causton, who acted as the young lady's guardian, was pleased with the match, the Governor did all he could to help it on; the lady herself was an apt scholar, if not in her French, at least in her piety, and when her clerical lover fell sick she nursed him as faithfully as if she had been his wife already. Thus the poor missionary had one ray of sunshine in his dark and stormy sky. But, alas for him! this learned gentleman, who in after years developed so great a knowledge of men, never could understand a woman. He was quite impressible to female charms. He used while at Oxford to write pious letters to high-born ladies, signing himself “Cyrus,” and addressing them by like fanciful titles: chief of whom was “Aspasia,” whose real name was Mary Granville, a niece of Lord Lansdowne, a beautiful, wealthy, and accomplished woman, who was half captivated by the extraordinary learning, piety, and courtesy of the chief of the Oxford Methodists; but “something happened,” nobody knows what, and John Wesley was still a bachelor; a little lonely, perhaps, and well he might be in such a wretched lodge in the wilderness; what was more natural than that he should become tenderly interested in the most interesting young person in his parish?

Miss Sophia Christiana Hopkey was a proper young woman, of a thoughtful and studious turn of mind, as anxious to learn as Wesley was to teach, the most promising lamb in all his troublesome flock; and this young missionary did just what almost any other man might have done in a similar case, that is to say, he bestowed a larger amount of pastoral care on this sweet parishioner than was strictly necessary, and suffered her to capture what there was left of his heart. But his pupil, Delamotte, for some reason or other, was displeased with the drift of affairs, and ventured to ask his master if he really meant to marry the girl; whereupon Wesley, who in such matters was ever of a doubtful mind, laid the subject before his friends, the Moravian elders. Delamotte was too active in the business, as appears from

the fact that when Mr. Wesley appeared to submit his case before the synod of Moravians he found his pupil already there among them.

“Will you abide by our decision?” asked Bishop Nitschmann.

“I will,” replied Mr. Wesley, after some hesitation.

“Then we advise you,” said Nitschmann, “to proceed no further in the matter.”

“The will of the Lord be done,” responded Wesley; and from that time, says Moore, one of his biographers, “he avoided everything that tended to continue the intimacy with Miss Hopkey, and behaved with the greatest caution toward her;” a course of conduct which might have been more to his credit if he had entered upon it earlier, or kept it up more consistently.

In Mr. Wesley’s counsels to young Methodist preachers he lays down this rule: “Take no step toward marriage without consulting with your brethren;” a piece of extra scriptural advice which certainly was not supported by his experience in this case, unless, indeed, he was of the opinion that if he had consulted with the brethren at an earlier stage of the proceedings he might have saved himself a great deal of trouble: however that may be, it is certain that by publicly submitting this delicate question to the decision of the Moravian elders, and blindly binding himself to obey their will, he committed the supreme blunder in that list of absurdities which make up the record of his mission to America.

Of course the lady was indignant that her priestly lover, having won her, should ask the Moravian brethren whether or no he might take her, and she showed her resentment by immediately marrying another man, one Williamson, of whom Mr. Wesley, in his Journal, expresses this somewhat spiteful opinion:—

“March 8. Miss Sophy engaged herself to Mr. Williamson, a person not remarkable for handsomeness, neither for greatness, neither for wit, nor knowledge, nor sense, and, least of all, for religion.”

Four days afterward they were married, and of this event the afflicted lover writes: “What Thou doest, O Lord, I know

not now, but I shall know hereafter." That he was deeply wounded there can be no doubt; for after a lapse of nearly fifty years, in looking back upon that sad experience, he says: "I was pierced through as with a sword. But our comfort is, He that made the heart can heal the heart." It never for one moment appears to have entered his mind what grief he may have caused the young lady whom he sacrificed to the opinions of men that had no right to judge the case at all, and his pious resignation is a poor atonement for his manifest unfaithfulness to the woman he loved, whose affections he had sought, and who, according to all accounts, was every way worthy to be his wife.

If this had been the only unfortunate experience of this kind in the career of the great Methodist, it might be possible to accept the above expressions as evidence of an exquisite agony and a life-long martyrdom in consequence of his half-formed judgment that a priest ought not to marry, at least, not without the approval of his brethren; but, according to high authority, this was his third affair of the heart,* and he afterward had two more rather notable ones, as we shall see, the last of which resulted in a hasty and ill-assorted marriage; therefore it is difficult to be very much moved by these sorrowful words, or to see by what right the sorrowing lover could charge over to the Lord what was the plain result of his own misdoing. A heart once broken may be an object of tender sympathy, but a heart broken several times over, even though it be the heart of John Wesley, is somehow suggestive of frailty, as well as of affection.

Miss Sophy declares that when Wesley learned of her engagement to Williamson he renewed his addresses in the most vehement manner, and even offered to give up some of his severe high-church practices, on account of which he had become so obnoxious to the colonists, and to settle down with her at Savannah.† The personal character of this lady is highly praised by Mr. Wesley's chief biographer, who accepts her statement without contradiction. But after such behaviour there was no pardon possible. Besides, she was

* "The Living Wesley," by Dr. Rigg.

† Tyermann's "Life and Times of Wesley," p. 149.

now pledged to another, and if Wesley was willing to break his vow to the Moravians, Miss Sophy would not break hers to her affianced husband.

It is not a little amusing to read in the solemn pages of some of Wesley's biographers the grave surmises of what calamities would have befallen if he had not "escaped" from this and that and the other love affair; how he would in one case have settled into a mere country parson, in another have come to be a life-long missionary to the Georgia Indians, etc. As if the Lord could not manage and use John Wesley married as well as John Wesley single! Is not matrimony a means of grace? And has not God been able to make great use of other married men? If there is any blessedness in "escaping" from impending matrimony, to which he by his own conduct was repeatedly "exposed," then John Wesley is entitled to be congratulated on his good fortune; but all sensible men, and all women whatsoever, are more likely to look on such halting between two opinions as an evidence of pitiful weakness instead of providential protection. And why, on the latter supposition, was he suffered at last to fall into the hands of the widow Vazeille, who used actually to tear his hair?

Mrs. Williamson was still one of his parishioners, and when, some months after her marriage, he gave her some pastoral reproof, and at another time publicly repelled her from the Lord's Supper, her husband and her former guardian took up the quarrel, framed the indictment above mentioned, and cited the missionary to appear before his high mightiness, Mr. Chief Magistrate Causton, for trial, on the charge of various priestly tyrannies, and especially for the affront to Mrs. Williamson, whose husband sued for damages for defamation to the amount of one thousand pounds.

The whole colony was in an uproar. It was said, of course, that Mr. Wesley had refused the Lord's Supper to the lady because she had refused to marry him; to which he replied that he had given her the eucharist several times since her marriage, and that the reason of his refusal on this occasion was, that she did not give notice to him, according to the rubric in the Prayer Book, of her intention to present

herself at the Lord's table, and therefore his act could not be understood in the light of a public defamation of her Christian character and standing; the more because he had treated several other persons in the same way. To the other charges he replied that the acts complained of were ecclesiastical in their character, and over such cases Mr. Justice Causton's court had no jurisdiction, notwithstanding that the grand jury of Savannah had found a true bill against him.

In the action for damages he prepared to defend himself, and demanded an early trial, but it was put over from time to time on various pretexts; and after the seventh postponement, the defendant, finding he could neither obtain justice nor be of any use as a minister under such conditions, gave up in despair, and announced his purpose of returning to England. Upon this the magistrates demanded that he should give bail for his appearance when wanted, but Wesley still defied their authority, and in return they gave orders that he should not be permitted to leave the colony, and forbade any person to assist him in so doing. They also brought another minister to perform service in the parish, a Mr. Dixon, who was chaplain to some soldiers at Frederica; and thus practically supplanted Mr. Wesley in his office.

That same evening, Wesley, with four other fugitives, who had reasons of their own for getting away, started in an open boat for Port Royal, in South Carolina, which place they reached after hard toiling and rowing by sea, and great hardships by land, on the 6th of December, 1737. On the 8th, Mr. Delamotte rejoined his master at Port Royal, when they took a small craft and started for the port of Charleston, which they reached on the 13th. On the 22nd, John Wesley bade a long goodbye to North America, and on the 1st of February reached England, only one day after George Whitefield had set sail for the very colony that he had been compelled to leave.

It appears that when their much-abused minister had actually gone and left them, some of his old parishioners began to feel more kindly toward him, and managed to find a good word to say of him to his friend Whitefield, when he arrived; for Mr. Whitefield, in a letter from Georgia, says:

“The good Mr. John Wesley has done in America is inexpressible. His name is very precious among the people, and he has laid a foundation that I hope neither men nor devils will ever be able to shake.”

Foundation of what? Neither Mr. Whitefield nor any one else has ever been able to tell.

Mr. Wesley himself writes in a different strain.

“Many reasons I have to bless God for my having been carried to America, contrary to all my preceding resolutions. Hereby I trust He hath in some measure humbled me and proved me, and shown me what was in my heart. I went to America to convert the Indians; but oh, who shall convert me? . . .

“This, then, I have learned in the ends of the earth—that I am fallen short of the glory of God; that my whole heart is altogether corrupt and abominable; . . . that my own works, my own sufferings, my own righteousness, are so far from reconciling me to an offended God, so far from making an atonement for the least of those sins, which are more in number than the hairs of my head, that the most specious of them need an atonement themselves, or they cannot abide His righteous judgment. . . . I have no hope but that if I seek I shall find Christ, and be found in Him, not having my own righteousness, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith.” This strong statement he afterward modified by remarking that even then he had “the faith of a servant, but not of a son.”

From this time he dwelt continually upon salvation as the gift of God through faith in Jesus Christ. His first sermon on his return to London was at the church of St. John the Evangelist, from the text, “If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature.” His second was at St. Andrew’s Church, Holborn, on “Though I give all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing.” On both of which occasions he gave such offence that the doors of those churches were henceforth shut against him.

CHAPTER IV.

WHITEFIELD ORDAINED, AND THE WESLEYS CONVERTED.

NO sooner were the Wesleys gone on their mission to Georgia than their chief pupil came to the front to begin that wonderful career on account of which it may be said of him, as was said of John the Baptist, "There was a man sent from God whose name was" George Whitefield.

On the 20th of June, 1736, Bishop Benson ordained him deacon, and he went forth to preach, with almost apostolic power, the gospel doctrine of regeneration. The "boy parson," as he was called, was but little past twenty-one years old when he took the holy vows of ordination in the old cathedral of his native town of Gloucester, concerning which event he writes to a friend as follows :—

"I can call heaven and earth to witness that when the Bishop laid his hands upon me I gave myself up to be a martyr for Him who hung upon the cross for me. Known unto Him are all future events and contingencies. I have thrown myself blindfold, and, I trust, without reserve, into His almighty hands."

Of his outfit of sermons, he says : "Never a poor creature set up with so small a stock. I thought I should have time to make at least a hundred sermons with which to begin my ministry. But so far from this being the case, I have not a single one except that which I made for a small society, and which I sent to a neighbouring clergyman to convince him how unfit I was to take upon me the important work of preaching." This discourse, of which he had so poor an opinion, was on "The Necessity and Benefit of Religious Society," and three days afterward he preached it to a great congregation in the church where, in his infancy, he had been baptized.

The tapster of the Bell Inn was now come to be a parson ;

from standing behind the bar he was come to stand in the pulpit, and all Gloucester must needs come to hear the youthful prodigy, who was doing such great credit to their town. Here is his account of this maiden effort :—

“GLOUCESTER, *June 30, 1736.*

“MY DEAR FRIEND,—Glory! glory! glory! be ascribed to the Triune God! Last Sunday, in the afternoon, I preached my first sermon in the Church of St. Mary de Crypt, where I was baptized, and also received the sacrament of the Lord’s Supper. Curiosity, as you may easily guess, drew a large congregation together. The sight at first a little awed me, but I was comforted with a heartfelt sense of the Divine Presence, and soon found the unspeakable advantage of having been accustomed to public speaking when a boy at school, and of exhorting and teaching the prisoners and poor people at their houses while at the University. By these means I was kept from being daunted overmuch. As I proceeded I could see that the fire kindled, till at last, though so young, and amid a crowd who knew me in my childish days, I was enabled to speak with some degree of gospel authority. A few mocked, but most for the present seemed struck; and I have since heard that a complaint has been made to the Bishop that I drove fifteen mad. The worthy prelate, as I am informed, wished that the madness might not be forgotten before next Sunday.”

“He preached like a lion,” was the comment of one of his simple-minded hearers on the “boy parson’s” first sermon.

He had been but a month in London, preaching with great success, when letters came from the Wesleys in Georgia, desiring that more ministers be sent out to their assistance, and at once the heart of Mr. Whitefield was fired with missionary zeal; but many friends who had noticed his wonderful power and genius advised him to remain in England. After his return to Oxford he received the offer of a very profitable curacy in London, which he declined, though he was almost penniless and somewhat in debt, for no other apparent reason than that he did not hear the voice of God calling him in that direction.

The return of Mr. Charles Wesley from Georgia in December of that year was the signal for Whitefield to offer himself as a missionary to America. In his letter to that gentleman he ventures to ask him why he chose to go out as secretary to Mr. Oglethorpe, instead of going in the character of a labourer in the Lord's vineyard, when by his own account there was great need of such godly service—a question which must have probed the heart of this double-minded man very deeply. “Did the Bishop ordain us, my dear friend, to write bonds, receipts, etc., or to preach the Gospel? Or dare we not trust God to provide for our relations without endangering, or at least retarding, our spiritual improvement? But I go too far. You know I was always heady nad self-willed.”

The offer of the “boy-parson” having been accepted, he made ready for immediate departure. The little fleet with which he was to sail was to take out some soldiers for the defence of British interests in the southern colonies of America against the Spaniards, who were beginning to trouble them; and as in those slow-going days such matters were not settled in haste, it was a whole year before everything was quite ready and the three ships actually put to sea. And an eventful year it proved; for in 1737 England was startled from its ecclesiastical slumbers as it never had been before. The little cloud which first appeared at Oxford now overspread the heavens, and blessings began to pour down in torrents. This young missionary, whose intended departure across the sea was an excuse for his irregularity, became a roving evangelist, and so wonderful was the success that attended his labours, that his name was heralded all over the kingdom. He was soon in great request as a preacher of charity sermons on behalf of schools, orphanages, and the like, and, with a careful foresight of what he might need in his new and distant parish, he also improved the opportunity by raising about three hundred pounds for his Georgia mission.

The burden of the English pulpit in those days was morality towards God and loyalty to the king. The people were exhorted to be good and they would be happy; a doctrine which is well enough as far as it goes, but which falls

lamentably short of the purposes for which the Gospel was ordained. The doctrine of regeneration was not then, and is not now, a very popular one among the English clergy. The pious and pugnacious Toplady, afterwards one of the thorns in Wesley's side, has been quoted to the effect that fifty years before his day "a converted minister in the Establishment was as great a wonder as a comet;" and now also the case was very much the same.

This was, however, the doctrine of all others which Whitefield knew how to preach. His conversion was not one of those faint, intermittent, long-drawn, half-unconscious processes of grace which certain religious teachers set forth as the appropriate thing for all persons who wish to serve God elegantly and easily. He had been born again, and he knew it; knew when, and where, and by what power he had passed suddenly from nature's darkness into the marvellous light of God's favour; he had been transformed by the renewing of his mind; the Holy Spirit had been poured out upon him; he had bathed in seas of joy, and revelled in floods of glory; no wonder, then, that for a time he preached little else but regeneration.

The second sermon Whitefield ever preached, and the first he ever published, was upon the text, "If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature;" in which he likens this mystery to the work wrought in the body of Naaman the leper. The regenerate man, or the man who is in Christ, he says, is indeed the self-same man, but he has been "made anew." Another of his sermons was from the text, "Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian," which, like many another discourse of his, was made to serve the double purpose of awakening sinners and drawing unprecedented sums of money from their purses for the treasury of the Lord.

In his day it was usual for preachers to measure the invisible by the visible, and attempt to discern spiritual truths by natural means. Not so with Whitefield. He dwelt among the divine realities which he found described in the Word of God, and by hearing him relate his experience people began to take in the idea that salvation amounted to something; that it was real and tangible; not the unconscious effect of sacraments administered by the clergy, but a divine

communication ; Christ in the soul, hell put under foot, and heaven actually begun.

After some months he went up to London to see if his expedition was not ready to sail, and here, as in the provinces, he was set upon to preach charity sermons, some of the London churches being open to him on account of his money-raising abilities, which would otherwise have been closed against him on account of his “extravagant” notions about the conversion of sinners. Two of the city clergy offered him the use of their pulpits, if he would cut out certain parts of his sermon in which he treated of regeneration ; but, said the boy-parson, “This I had no freedom to do, so they continued my opposers.”

Unlike his teachers, the two Wesleys, Mr. Whitefield was on friendly terms with dissenters, some of whom used to invite the young minister to their houses to commune with him on his favourite doctrine of regeneration. “If the doctrine of the new birth and justification by faith was preached powerfully in the Church,” said they, “there would be but few dissenters in England.”

Whitefield says he found their conversation “savoury,” and imagined the best way to “bring them over was not by bigotry and railing, but by moderation and love and undissembled holiness of life.” But this did not suit the high-church clergy of the metropolis, one of whom called him a “pragmatical rascal,” and denounced the whole body of dissenters in savagely apostolic style ; that is to say, in the style of those half-fledged apostles who forbade the casting out of devils by one who did not belong to their own company.

In spite of this, and, indeed, partly because of it, Whitefield’s popularity increased till it became almost impossible for him to walk the London streets on account of the crowd that gathered about him. He says : “I was constrained to go from place to place in a coach to avoid the hosannas of the multitude. They grew quite extravagant in their applause, and had it not been for my compassionate High Priest, popularity would have destroyed me. I used to plead with Him to take me by the hand and lead me through this fiery furnace. He heard my request, and gave me to see the vanity of all commendations but His own.”

A report was circulated by his jealous enemies, that the Bishop of London, at the request of the clergy, was about to silence this young enthusiast; but when he waited on that dignitary to inquire about it he found that no such sword was hanging over his head. Bishop Gibson was a man of sound judgment and real piety, whose great power and influence, both in Church and State, led his enemies to call him the "London Pope;" and with this prelate on his side, the young missionary had nothing to fear at the hands of curates and rectors, who hated the new preaching because it showed them to be still in their sins.

All this while Mr. Whitefield had tried to keep within the usages and traditions of the Establishment. He read prayers out of the Prayer Book in all public services; but on one occasion, in a little meeting with some friends, his over-burdened soul broke out of ritualistic bounds, and for the first time he attempted to pray *extempore*. "Some time, I think, in October," says he, "we began to set apart an hour every evening to intercede with the great Head of the Church to carry on the work begun, and for the circle of our acquaintance, according as we knew their circumstances required. I was mouth unto God, and He only knows what enlargement I felt in that divine employ. Once we spent the whole night in prayer and praise, and many a time at midnight, and at one in the morning, after I had been wearied almost to death in preaching, writing, and conversation, and going from place to place, God imparted new life to my soul, and enabled me to intercede with Him for an hour and a half and two hours together. The sweetness of that exercise made me compose my sermon on 'Intercession.'"

On the 6th of January, 1738, Whitefield, having been duly appointed to the cure of souls in Savannah, and having persistently declined all the advantageous propositions which loving friends and wealthy admirers could make to detain him, amid the tears and prayers of the multitudes who literally blocked his path, went on board his ship at Gravesend, and set his face toward America.

Among the Methodists it has always been regarded as a strange thing for a minister to come into the holy office without a new heart. God grant that it may always be so!

But the first form of Oxford Methodism was nothing but a desperate human effort after holiness, and none of the Holy Club except Whitefield had thus far experienced that divine mystery, the new birth. During the most of this notable year, 1737, Charles Wesley had been in England, working and worrying over Georgia affairs. The wretched state of mind in which at this time he was living will appear from the following extract from his Journal:—

"January 22, 1737. I called upon Mrs. Pendarvis while she was reading a letter of my being dead. Happy for me had the news been true! What a world of misery would it have saved me!"

During the month of February he was very ill, and while lying at death's door, Peter Bohler, one of the Moravian missionaries who was in London, waiting for a ship to Georgia, called upon him, and, after prayer, said to him—

"You will not die now. Do you hope to be saved?"

"Yes," answered Charles Wesley.

"For what reason do you hope it?"

"Because I have used my best endeavours to serve God."

Bohler shook his head and said no more, at which Wesley thought him very uncharitable. "What!" he continues in his Journal, "are not my endeavours a sufficient ground of hope? Would he rob me of my endeavours? I have nothing else to trust to?" *

Charles Wesley was neither the first nor the last to be scandalized by the "obstinacy" of wiser men than himself. It is rather "unedifying" to have one's prejudices overthrown by obstinate, uncomfortable facts.

Soon after this his illness increased upon him so that he had to be carried about in a chair; but he still kept on with his "endeavours," and "used" a great deal of prayer for conversion. Besides his friend Peter Bohler, there was one Mr. Bray, a Smithfield brazier, an ignorant man, but a happy believer in the Lord Jesus Christ, to whose house he was carried, and who showed him the way of faith more perfectly, whereupon he began to cry out to God most

* Jackson's "Life of Charles Wesley," p. 110.

earnestly, and to beg that Christ would come to him and save his soul. The following brief notes from his Journal set forth his progressive state of mind :—

“May 13. I waked without Christ, yet still desirous of finding Him. At night my brother came, exceeding heavy. I forced him, as he had often forced me, to sing a hymn to Christ, and almost thought He would come while we were singing.”

“May 14. Found much comfort in prayer and in the Word. I longed to find Christ, that I might show Him to all mankind. Several persons called to-day, and were convinced of unbelief. Some of them afterward went to Mr. Broughton, and were soon made as easy as Satan and their own hearts could wish.”

“May 17. To-day I first saw ‘Luther on the Galatians.’ Who would believe our Church had been founded upon this important article of justification by faith alone! I am astonished I should ever think this a new doctrine. I spent some hours this evening in private with Martin Luther, who was greatly blessed to me. I laboured, waited, and prayed to feel ‘Who loved *me* and gave Himself for *me*!’ When nature, near exhausted, forced me to bed, I opened the book upon ‘For He will finish the work, and cut it short in righteousness.’ After this comfortable assurance that He would come, and would not tarry, I slept in peace.”

The “opening of the book” was one of the customs of the Holy Club. They treated the Bible as a holy oracle to be consulted on all occasions, and for the settlement of all spiritual questions. The manner of doing it was by opening the book at random, and reading the first passage on which the eye happened to rest. This habit is frequently referred to in the Journals of the Wesleys, and sometimes in that of Whitefield. It was one of the “superstitious practices” alleged against them by their enemies, and often apologized for by their friends, though God seems at times to have greatly comforted them thereby. Nevertheless, all traces of this habit disappear from the records of their lives in later years, as if on larger trial it had not been found safe or sure.

“Sunday, May 21, 1738. The Day of Pentecost. I

waked in hope and expectation of His coming. At nine my brother and some friends came, and sang a hymn to the Holy Ghost. My comfort and hope were hereby increased. In about half an hour they went. I betook myself to prayer, the substance as follows: ‘O Jesus, Thou hast said, “*I will come unto you.*” Thou hast said, “*I will send the Comforter unto you.*” Thou hast said, “*My Father and I will come unto you, and make our abode with you.*” Thou art God, who canst not lie. I wholly rely upon Thy most true promise. Accomplish it in Thy time and manner.’” After this prayer, as he was composing himself to sleep, one of his friends, moved by what he thought to be the direction of the Lord, came to the door of his room, and recited these words in his hearing:—

“IN THE NAME OF JESUS OF NAZARETH, ARISE AND BELIEVE, AND THOU SHALT BE HEALED OF ALL THY INFIRMITIES.”

“‘O that Christ would speak thus to me!’ I cried, feeling, at the same time, a strange palpitation of heart. I said, yet feared to say, ‘I believe! I believe!’”

John, the elder brother, was only four days behind the younger in entering the kingdom of God. For years he had possessed religion enough to make him miserable, as well as to enable him to make other people so. He was the holiest man of the Holy Club; but his pharisaism had been already broken down by what he had learned in America; and he had reached the point of believing that there is such a work as regeneration, wrought by the Holy Spirit, and that this work may be done instantly the moment a sinner believes on Christ with all his heart. He confesses himself to have been greatly humbled, and professes his desire for “that faith which none can have without knowing that he hath it.” From the Moravians in Georgia, and from the Moravian priest, Peter Bohler, in London, he had learned something of the righteousness which is by faith; something of a sense of pardon which gives constant peace, and something of a work of the Holy Ghost upon the soul which gives dominion over sin. At first he was surprised, and resisted these truths as the inventions of man, but the faithful Peter Bohler plied him with texts of Scripture and facts of Christian experience

till the master of logic was utterly driven from his former conclusions, and brought up face to face with his privilege and duty of immediate and conscious salvation, as the free gift of God.

It is singular to note that while John Wesley was confessing his own want of saving faith he should be blessed of God in leading others into it ; among the rest a condemned felon in Newgate, to whom he had at first refused to preach at all, on the ground that he had no faith in death-bed repentance, and repentance by a man about to be hanged was very much after that sort. His unlooked-for success with this prisoner led him to dwell on the theme of conscious pardon of sin through faith in the Redeemer in the discourses which he preached in some of the London churches, but the word that was so blessed to the criminal was rejected by the more fortunate sinners who made up Wesley's London congregations, and one after another the doors of the London churches were closed against him. For instance, a few days after his sermon in St. Ann's Church, on "Free Salvation by Faith in the Blood of Christ," he makes this entry in his Journal :—

"I was quickly apprised that at St. Ann's, likewise, I am to preach no more. So true did I find the words of a friend, written to my brother about this time: 'I have seen upon this occasion, more than ever I could have imagined, how intolerable the doctrine of faith is to the mind of man, and how peculiarly intolerable to *religious* men.'"

In nothing is the grace of God more manifest than in changing John Wesley, the recent high-church bigot, into a docile, teachable inquirer after the truth. It was hard for this learned priest to become a "little child," but all things are possible with God. The change took place on Wednesday, May 24. In the afternoon of that day he went, greatly depressed, to St. Paul's, when the anthem was "Out of Deep," etc. ; and "in the evening," to quote his own words, he went "very unwillingly to a society in Aldersgate Street, where one was reading Luther's Preface to the Epistle to the Romans. About a quarter before nine, while he was describing the change which God works in the heart through faith in Christ, I felt my heart strangely warmed. I felt I did trust in Christ, Christ alone, for salvation : and an assurance was

given me that He had taken away *my* sins, even *mine*, and saved *me* from the law of sin and death."

Being now converted and saved, one of his first steps was to seek further instruction in the things of God from the Moravian brethren, whose chief settlement was the famous little community of Herrnhut,* the Moravian head-quarters in Upper Lusatia, near the borders of Bohemia. This settlement was made by a company of Lutheran converts, who were compelled to flee for their lives before the soldiers of the Pope and the devil in Moravia, and who were afforded an asylum in Saxony, and a home on the estates of Nicholas Ludwig, Count of Zinzendorf. This nobleman, who was also a Saxon bishop, was not only the patron of this band of exiles, but was otherwise largely devoted to works of charity and religion. He maintained an orphanage near his castle at Marienborn, and he afterwards claimed that from his own estates he had sent out three hundred preachers of the Gospel into all parts of the world. This was the origin of that body of Christians now known as the United Brethren.

The determination of Wesley to go to the very depths of this matter of experimental religion, and his absolute abandonment of himself for that purpose, appears in an incident related of him during a few weeks he spent with them. Like the Moravians themselves, he submitted to be governed by the Count and Bishop Zinzendorf, as well as to be instructed by the godly pastor, Christian David; and the Count, with a view of testing his reverend pupil for spiritual pride, and to mortify it if any should be found, sent Wesley into the fields to dig like a common labourer. He meekly obeyed. After he had been at this work for awhile the Count came out and directed him to take his place in his carriage, as he was going to call upon a neighbouring nobleman.

"Pray allow me to make my toilet," said Wesley.

"By no means," answered the Count; "it will help to mortify your spiritual pride to go as you are." And there was nothing to do but submit.

The mother of the Wesleys, having heard her son Samuel's account of what he regarded as the absurdities of his bre-

* Watch Hill.

thren, wrote a letter to them, in which she took them to task for the wild extravagances that followed their preaching; but later on, being made personally acquainted with the progress of the work of God under their hands, she changed her criticisms for commendations, and afterward herself entered into the same blessed experience of saving grace.

The following, from John Wesley's Journal, under date of Sept. 3, 1739, shows how defective were even the most evangelical teachings of the 17th and 18th centuries on the subject of experimental religion:—

“Monday, Sept. 3. I talked largely with my mother, who told me that till a short time since she had scarce heard such a thing mentioned as the having forgiveness of sins now, or God's Spirit bearing witness with our spirit: much less did she imagine that this was the common privilege of all true believers. ‘Therefore,’ said she, ‘I never durst ask for myself. But two or three weeks ago, while my son Hall was pronouncing those words, in delivering the cup to me, “The blood of our Lord Jesus Christ, which was given for thee,” the words struck through my heart, and I knew God, for Christ's sake, had forgiven me all *my* sins.’

“I asked whether her father (Dr. Annesley) had not the same faith, and whether she had not heard him preach it to others. She answered he had it himself, and declared, a little before his death, that for more than forty years he had no darkness, no fear, no doubt at all of his being ‘accepted in the Beloved.’ But that, nevertheless, she did not remember to have heard him preach, no, not once, explicitly upon it: whence she supposed he also looked upon it as the peculiar blessing of a few, not as promised to all the people of God.”

Several of the daughters are also mentioned in the Journal as being happily converted; and at last Samuel himself, shortly before his death, which occurred November 6, 1739, just as the Methodist revival was getting fairly under way, emerged from his cave of traditional darkness into the light of conscious salvation.

CHAPTER V.

THE GOSPEL IN WORD AND IN POWER.

THE churches being closed against them, the Wesleys were glad to gain an audience in the prisons. Both the brothers were often found in the cells of the men about to die, and to them it was an especial cause of joy to find that Christ was "able to save unto the uttermost" all who came unto God by Him, though in their more promiscuous prison services they must have sometimes been almost at their wits' end what to do with their rough and vicious auditors.

Here are some extracts from the Journal of Charles Wesley, relating to this sorrowful but successful ministry:—

"July 12th. I preached at Newgate to the condemned felons, and visited one of them in his cell, sick of a fever—a poor black, that had robbed his master. I told him of One who came down from heaven to save lost sinners, and him in particular; described the sufferings of the Son of God, His sorrows, agony, and death. He listened with all the signs of eager astonishment. The tears trickled down his cheeks while he cried, 'What! was it for me?'"

"July 15th. Rejoiced with my poor happy black, now believing the Son of God loved him and gave Himself for him."

"July 18th. At night I was locked in with Bray, in one of the cells. We wrestled in mighty prayer. All the criminals were present, and all delightfully cheerful. Joy was visible in all their faces."

"July 19th. By half-past ten we came to Tyburn. Then were brought the children appointed to die. We had prayed before that our Lord would show there was a power superior to the fear of death. They were all cheerful, full of comfort,

peace, and triumph, assuredly persuaded Christ had died for them, and waited to receive them into paradise. None showed any natural terror of death: no fear, or crying, or tears. I never saw such calm triumph, such incredible indifference to dying. . . . I could do nothing but rejoice: kissed Hudson and Newington; took leave of each in particular. Exactly at twelve they were turned off. When the cart drew off, not one stirred or struggled for life, but meekly gave up their spirits. That hour under the gallows was the most blessed hour of my life."

It will be remembered that Mrs. Wesley named her assembly at the Epworth rectory a "Society:" a name that has held a prominent place in Methodist history, and which is still in use by British Wesleyans to designate an organized congregation, which they modestly refrain from calling a "Church."

It was also at the meetings of what the Moravians called "Societies" that Wesley caught the idea of using the testimony of converted persons concerning their experience of salvation, to supply in some measure the lack of service on the part of the ministry. There were but very few clergy in England who could take care of a company of young converts, or carry on the work of bringing others to a saving knowledge of Christ; and as the revival of spiritual religion began to spread, it became necessary to set these little companies thus to take care of and edify one another, while the Moravian "Societies" in London afforded him and his friends that religious fellowship which he could not find in his own communion on account of his "extravagance" and "enthusiasm."

Those little confidential companies of Moravians at Herrnhut, who used to meet every week, and turn their hearts inside out, in order to receive counsel from, or give encouragement to, their brethren, greatly interested him, and for some time after his return from Germany he appears as a leader in the "Societies" at Fetter Lane, Bear Yard, Gutter Lane, and at the Society in Aldersgate Street, so memorable as the place of his conversion.

What were these Societies?

Some of them were companies of United Brethren, gathered by the Moravian missionaries; others were the remnants of

certain religious assemblies of people belonging to the Established Church, which had been organized during a notable revival in London in 1699. It may have been from these London Societies that Mrs. Wesley borrowed the name of her meeting in the Epworth rectory.

One of these “Societies” was organized by the Wesleys themselves before the visit of John to Herrnhut, and so great was its success that it was able to erect a chapel in Fetter Lane, London, from which it was called the Fetter Lane Society. This continued to be the head-quarters of the Methodist movement until Wesley’s secession therefrom, as will hereafter appear.

Near the end of the year 1738, Whitefield and Wesley’s old friend and pupil, Delamotte, returned from Georgia. As yet Mr. Whitefield had only taken deacon’s orders, and must needs return to England to be ordained a priest: besides, he was desirous of establishing an orphanage at Savannah, after the manner of the famous institution of Professor Francke, in Germany, and for this he must resume his course of charity sermons among his English friends and admirers. But he found the churches were closed against him, as well as against his friends, the Wesleys, and he was glad to be received by the “Societies,” which, under their labours, were fast becoming a power in the British capital.

The strange scenes which often accompanied the early services of the Methodists in England are plentifully mentioned in Mr. Wesley’s Journal. He claims them as evidence that God is with him, and defends himself from the storm of abuse which he encountered on account of them by boldly declaring their supernatural or subternatural character. The Lord and the devil, he was quite sure, both took these striking methods of showing their interest in the Methodist revival. But let Wesley himself speak:—

“Thursday, Nov. 25, 1738. While I was preaching at Newgate on these words, ‘He that believeth hath everlasting life,’ I was insensibly led, without any previous design, to declare strongly and explicitly that God willeth ‘all men to be’ thus ‘saved,’ and to pray that, ‘if this were not the truth of God, He would not suffer the blind to go out of the way; but if it were, He would bear witness to His word.’

Immediately one and another and another sank to the earth ; they dropped on every side as thunderstruck. One of them cried aloud. We besought God in her behalf, and He turned her heaviness into joy. A second being in the same agony, we called upon God for her also ; and He spoke peace unto her soul. In the evening I was again pressed in spirit to declare that 'Christ gave Himself a ransom for all.' And almost before we called upon Him to set to His seal, He answered. One was so wounded by the sword of the Spirit, that you would have imagined she could not live a moment. But immediately His abundant kindness was shown, and she loudly sang of His righteousness."

"Friday, 26. All Newgate rang with the cries of those whom the Word of God cut to the heart. Two of whom were in a moment filled with joy, to the astonishment of those that beheld them."

"April 17, 1739. At Baldwin Street [one of the Societies in Bristol] we called upon God to confirm His word. Immediately, one that stood by cried out aloud, with the utmost vehemence, even as in the agonies of death. But we continued in prayer till a new song was put into her mouth, a thanksgiving unto our God. Soon after, two other persons were seized with strong pain, and constrained to roar for the disquietude of their heart. But it was not long before they likewise burst forth into praise to God their Saviour. The last who called upon God, as out of the belly of hell, was a stranger in Bristol ; and in a short space he also was overwhelmed with joy and love, knowing that God had healed his backslidings."

"April 21. At Weavers' Hall [another Bristol 'Society'] a young man was suddenly seized with a violent trembling all over, and in a few minutes sank to the ground. But we ceased not calling upon God till He raised him up full of peace and joy in the Holy Ghost."

"April 24. At Baldwin Street a young man, after a sharp though short agony, both of body and mind, found his soul filled with peace, knowing in whom he had believed."

In another place he says: "I began reading prayers and preaching in Gloucester Green Workhouse; and on Thursday, in that belonging to St. Thomas's parish. On both

days I preached at the castle. At St. Thomas's was a young woman, raving mad, screaming and tormenting herself continually. I had a strong desire to speak to her. The moment I began she was still. The tears ran down her cheeks all the time I was telling her 'Jesus of Nazareth is able and willing to deliver you.' Oh, where is faith upon earth? Why are these poor wretches left under the open bondage of Satan? Jesus, Master! give Thou medicine to heal their sickness, and deliver those who are now also vexed with unclean spirits!"

"Tuesday, Oct. 23, 1739. At eleven I preached at Bearfield to about three thousand, on nature, bondage, and adoption. Returning in the evening, I was exceedingly pressed to go back to a young woman in Kingswood. (The fact I nakedly relate, and leave every man to his own judgment of it.) I went. She was nineteen or twenty years old; but, it seems, could not write or read. I found her on the bed, two or three persons holding her. It was a terrible sight. Anguish, horror, and despair, above all description, appeared in her pale face. The thousand distortions of her whole body showed how the dogs of hell were gnawing her heart. The shrieks intermixed were scarce to be endured. But her stony eyes could not weep. She screamed out, as soon as words could find their way, 'I am damned, damned; lost for ever. Six days ago you might have helped me. But it is past. I am the devil's now. I have given myself to him. His I am. Him I must serve. With him I must go to hell. I cannot be saved. I will not be saved. I must, I will, I will be damned.' She then began praying to the devil. We began, 'Arm of the Lord, awake, awake!' She immediately sank down as asleep; but, as soon as we left off, broke out again, with inexpressible vehemence, 'Stony hearts, break! I am a warning to you. I am damned, that you may be saved.' She then fixed her eyes on the corner of the ceiling, and said, 'There he is; ay, there he is. Come, good devil, come. Take me away. I am yours. Come just now. Take me away.' We interrupted her by calling again upon God, on which she sank down as before, and another young woman began to roar out as loud as she had done. My brother now came in, it being about nine o'clock. We

continued in prayer till past eleven, when God in a moment spoke peace into the soul, first, of the first tormented, and then of the other. And they both joined in singing praise to Him who had 'stilled the enemy and the avenger.'"

"Wednesday, 24. I preached at Baptist Mills on those words of St. Paul, speaking in the person of one 'under the law' (that is, still 'carnal, and sold under sin,' though groaning for deliverance), 'I know that in me dwelleth no good thing.' A poor woman told me afterward, 'I does hope as my husband won't hinder me any more. For I minded he did shiver every bone of him, and the tears ran down his cheeks like the rain.'"

It would be easy to make a whole chapter of such cases, but these will serve to show the power which accompanied the word as preached by the leader of the Methodists, and which afterward gave similar testimony to the truth under the ministry of the first Methodists in America. Nor were these marvels found among Methodists alone. The very same superhuman influences are mentioned in the history of the great revival, which began at about the same time, at Northampton, in Massachusetts, under the ministry of that famous Congregationalist divine, Dr. Jonathan Edwards. The same agonies and ecstasies are also mentioned in connection with other great historic revivals of religion, and it is to be regretted that so many good people who have felt themselves called upon to denounce these "extravagances" should have overlooked the book of the Acts of the Apostles, whose records, if carefully studied, would have given them a more intelligent, as well as a more orthodox view of the case.

It was the impetuous Whitefield who set the example of field preaching, but his older brethren, the Wesleys, were soon led to follow it.

Whitefield, now returned from his first visit to America, had been ordained a priest by his old friend Bishop Benson, who says of him: "Though mistaken on some points, I think Mr. Whitefield a very pious, well-meaning young man, with good abilities and great zeal." Going to Georgia had not cured him of any of his "enthusiasm," nor shorn him of any of his strength. Again the churches from which he was not

shut out were overwhelmed with people, thousands of whom were glad to hear, even from the churchyard, the wonderful preacher whom they could not approach near enough to see, and they found the preaching to be the same old doctrine over again : Regeneration by the Holy Ghost ; and the same practical outcome : conversion of sinners, and collections for the Georgia mission.

At Bristol, the scene of his great success the year before, he was now denied the use of the churches, and was obliged to content himself with a sermon on "The Penitent Thief" to the prisoners in Newgate ; but even here he did not omit the collection, which on this occasion, he tells us, amounted to fifteen shillings. Here, also, the State Church authorities pursued him, and at their instance the mayor and magistrates commanded the jailor not to allow him to preach again in the prison, giving as a reason that "he insisted upon the necessity of being born again."

There was a village of colliers at Kingswood, near Bristol, a people whom he already knew to be almost in a state of barbarism, and on whom nothing was so likely to take saving effect as his favourite doctrine of regeneration. They were evidently too far gone in sin to be repaired ; any work that could reach their case must include a new nature, and begin with a new birth. Here on Sunday, February 17th, 1739, for the first time in England, George Whitefield preached in the open air. His congregation was made up of about two hundred of the Kingswood colliers, and of his experience in this connection he writes : "I believe I was never more acceptable to my Master than when I was standing to teach these hearers in the open fields."

On the 4th of March following he preached again in the open air at a place called Baptist Mills, to a congregation of three or four thousand people. The sight of this great throng elated him. "Blessed be God !" says he, "all things happen for the furtherance of the Gospel : I now preach to ten times as many people as I should if I had been confined to the churches. Surely the devil is blind, and so are his emissaries, or they would not so confound themselves."

The State Church of England was a part of the machinery of the Government. The Church was the instrument of the

State. The means of grace were matters for which Englishmen might be taxed. The regular clergy held their places by Act of Parliament, as well as by personal and political favour; they were therefore manageable. But the people called "Methodists," who were now becoming so numerous and so troublesome, were not disposed to submit to the political monopoly of religion claimed by the clergy and magistrates; and as for Whitefield, while he desired to do nothing contrary to his ordination vows in the Establishment, he could by no means refuse to heed the call of the great Shepherd and Bishop of souls, by whom he was appointed a preacher of righteousness. The churches were the property of the Establishment, but the out-of-doors belonged to the Lord; therefore when Whitefield found himself shut out of the Church of England, he straightway adjourned his services to the church of God.

It was a bold thing to do, but Whitefield does not seem to have been conscious of any great courage in the matter. He was already somewhat calloused by the abuse of his enemies, and to be called bad names by them did him little harm. On one occasion, at Coal-pit Heath, in the neighbourhood of Bristol, while he was preaching to a congregation of many thousands, a "gentleman" who was drunk interrupted him, called him a "dog," declared that he ought to be "whipped at the cart's tail"—which was one of the modes of punishment in that day—and offered money to any one who would pelt him with mud and stones; but the colliers were the friends of the preacher, and instead of pelting him they pelted his adversary until the over-zealous "gentleman" was glad to make his escape and leave the Methodist to go on with his sermon.

It was now necessary for Mr. Whitefield to leave the neighbourhood of Bristol, but he could not bear the thought of leaving this great flock to be scattered abroad as sheep having no shepherd, therefore he wrote to his friend John Wesley, at London, to come down to Bristol and carry on the work which he had begun; and, much to the grief of the London Societies, among whom Wesley had come to be a spiritual leader, as well as much against the prejudices of his brother Charles, who was shocked at the idea of anything

so irregular as an out-of-door service, he consented to make trial of this new method of work. But first the call was made a subject of special prayer by the brethren, after which the matter was submitted to the "test by lot," a common practice among the Moravians, and the lot decided that he should go.

Charles Wesley appears not to have been satisfied with the knowledge of the Divine will obtained in this manner, and submitted the case to the further test of "opening the book;" whereupon, the book being placed upon its back and allowed to fall open, the first text which caught his eye was, "Son of man, behold I take from thee the desire of thine eyes with a stroke, yet thou shalt not groan nor weep." Thus to all appearances it was the will of God that John Wesley should go down to Bristol, at which place he arrived on Saturday, the 31st of March, 1739. He would have gone to the ends of the earth on the strength of such a call.

Of his first service in Bristol, Mr. Wesley writes:—

"Saturday, 31. In the evening I reached Bristol, and met Mr. Whitefield there. I could scarce reconcile myself at first to this strange way of preaching in the fields, of which he set me an example on Sunday; having been all my life (till very lately) so tenacious of every point relating to decency and order, that I should have thought the saving of souls almost a sin if it had not been done in a church."

"April 1, 1739. In the evening (Mr. Whitefield being gone) I began expounding our Lord's sermon on the mount (one pretty remarkable precedent of field preaching, though I suppose there were churches at that time also) to a little society which was accustomed to meet once or twice a week in Nicholas Street."

"Monday, 2. At four in the afternoon I submitted to be more vile, and proclaimed in the highways the glad tidings of salvation, speaking from a little eminence in a ground adjoining to the city, to about three thousand people. The Scripture on which I spoke was this, (is it possible any one should be ignorant that it is fulfilled in every true minister of Christ?) 'The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because He hath anointed me to preach the Gospel to the poor. He

hath sent me to heal the broken-hearted ; to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovery of sight to the blind ; to set at liberty them that are bruised, to proclaim the acceptable-year of the Lord.”

This utterance of Mr. Wesley, which is perhaps more quoted than any other of his sayings, marks the long step in advance which he took when he began to preach in the fields. As a Churchman he was forbidden to preach in the parish of any clergyman without his consent ; but Wesley understood the jurisdiction of the local minister to be confined to the church and those premises which properly belonged thereto ; but that it should extend to all the commons, fields, and forests, he could not for a moment allow. When he was questioned as to his good faith in holding out-of-door services without the consent of the local clergy, he replied :—

“ You ask, ‘ How is it that I assemble Christians who are none of my charge, to sing psalms, and pray, and hear the Scriptures expounded, and think it hard to justify doing this in other men’s parishes, upon catholic principles ? ’

“ Permit me to speak plainly. If by catholic principles you mean any other than scriptural, they weigh nothing with me : I allow no other rule, whether of faith or practice, than the Holy Scriptures ; but on scriptural principles I do not think it hard to justify whatever I do. God in Scripture commands me, according to my power, to instruct the ignorant, reform the wicked, confirm the virtuous. Man forbids me to do this in another’s parish ; that is, in effect, to do it at all, seeing I have now no parish of my own, nor probably ever shall. Whom, then, shall I hear, God or man ? ‘ If it be just to obey man rather than God, judge you.’ ‘ A dispensation of the Gospel is committed to me ; and woe is me if I preach not the Gospel ! ’ But where shall I preach it upon the principles you mention ? Why, not in Europe, Asia, Africa, or America ; not in any of the Christian parts, at least, of the habitable earth. For all these are, after a sort, divided into parishes. If it be said, ‘ Go back, then, to the heathens from whence you came : ’ nay, but neither could I now (on your principles) preach to them : for all the heathens in Georgia belong to the parish either of Savannah or Frederica.

“Suffer me now to tell you my principles in this matter. I look upon all the world as my parish; thus far I mean, that in whatever part of it I am, I judge it meet, right, and my bounden duty, to declare unto all that are willing to hear the glad tidings of salvation. This is the work which I know God has called me to; and sure I am that His blessing attends it. Great encouragement have I, therefore, to be faithful in fulfilling the work He hath given me to do. His servant I am, and as such am employed according to the plain directions of His word, ‘as I have opportunity, doing good unto all men;’ and His providence clearly concurs with His word, which has disengaged me from all things else, that I might singly attend on this very thing, ‘and go about doing good.’”

One of the first thoughts of the converted colliers at Kingswood was the need of Christian education for their children, and Mr. Whitefield, at his farewell service, April 2, 1739, laid the corner-stone of a school; but the plans and the corner-stone comprised the chief assets of the enterprise when it fell into the hands of Mr. Wesley, who succeeded Whitefield in the care of the Kingswood mission. The following account of the work of grace among this benighted people, from Mr. Wesley’s Journal, gives a vivid picture of the life of a great class of persons in the England of that day; a population numbering hundreds of thousands, and scattered all over the mining districts of the kingdom:—

“Few persons have lived long in the west of England who have not heard of the colliers of Kingswood,* a people famous, from the beginning hitherto, for neither fearing God nor regarding man; so ignorant of the things of God, that they seemed but one remove from the beasts that perish;

* Kingswood was formerly a royal chase, containing between three and four thousand acres; but previous to the rise of Methodism it had been gradually appropriated by the several lords whose estates encircled it. The deer had disappeared, and the greater part of the wood also. Coal mines had been discovered, and it was now inhabited by a race of people as lawless as the foresters, their forefathers, but far more brutal; and differing as much from the people of the surrounding country in dialect as in appearance. They had no place of worship, for Kingswood then belonged to the parish of St. Philip, and was at least three miles distant from the parish church.

and therefore utterly without desire of instruction, as well as without the means of it.

“Many last winter used tauntingly to say of Mr. Whitefield, ‘If he will convert heathens, why does not he go to the colliers of Kingswood?’ In spring he did so. And as there were thousands who resorted to no place of public worship, he went after them into their own wilderness, ‘to seek and save that which was lost.’ When he was called away, others went into ‘the highways and hedges to compel them to come in.’ And by the grace of God their labour was not in vain. The scene is already changed. Kingswood does not now, as a year ago, resound with cursing and blasphemy. It is no more filled with drunkenness and uncleanness, and the idle diversions that naturally lead thereto. It is no longer full of wars and fightings, of clamour and bitterness, of wrath and envyings. Peace and love are there. Great numbers of the people are mild, gentle, and easy to be entreated. They ‘do not cry, neither strive,’ and hardly is their ‘voice heard in the streets;’ or, indeed, in their own wood, except when they are at their usual evening diversion, singing praise unto God their Saviour.

“That their children, too, might know the things which make for their peace, it was some time since proposed to build a house in Kingswood; and after many foreseen and unforeseen difficulties, in June last the foundation was laid. The ground made choice of was in the middle of the wood, between the London and Bath roads, not far from that called Two-Mile Hill, about three measured miles from Bristol.

“Here a large room was begun for the school, having four small rooms at either end for the schoolmasters (and perhaps, if it should please God, some poor children) to lodge in. Two persons are ready to teach so soon as the house is fit to receive them, the shell of which is nearly finished; so that it is hoped the whole will be completed in spring, or early in the summer.”

The singular spectacle of a clergyman of the Church of England, in gown and bands, standing on a table, or in a cart, or on the stump of a tree in the open fields, surrounded by a multitude of unwashed, uncombed, uncultivated people, down whose smutty faces the tears had washed little places

white, was something so wonderful as to attract the notice of the "higher classes," and accordingly, among the crowds were often seen the carriages of the nobility and gentry, to whom, however, the preacher was quite as plain and faithful as to the ruder portion of his audience, on which account he was regarded, in certain quarters, as a very rude and even dangerous person. How stupid of him not to be able to discern between sin in the rich and sin in the poor!

During a visit to the neighbouring city of Bath, which was at that time the centre of the English world of luxury, fashion, and leisure, a notorious rake and gambler, called Beau Nash, who was the acknowledged leader in Bath society, attempted to break up one of Wesley's out-of-door meetings. Soon after the preacher had commenced his sermon, the dandy appeared in gorgeous array, and impudently demanded,—

"By what authority dare you do what you are doing now?"

"By the authority of Jesus Christ, conveyed to me by him who is now Archbishop of Canterbury, when he laid his hands upon my head and said, 'Take thou authority to preach the Gospel,' " was Mr. Wesley's deliberate reply.

"But this is a conventicle," said Nash, "and contrary to Act of Parliament."

"No," answered Wesley; "conventicles are seditious meetings, but here is no sedition; therefore it is not contrary to Act of Parliament."

"I say it is," stormed the fellow; "and, besides, your preaching frightens people out of their wits."

"Sir," said Wesley, "did you ever hear me preach?"

"No."

"How can you judge of what you never heard?"

"I judge by common report."

"Is not your name Nash?" asked Wesley.

"It is," said the beau.

"Well, sir, I dare not judge *you* by common report," was Mr. Wesley's stinging reply.

The pretentious fop was confounded, especially when an old woman in the congregation took part in the argument against him, and instead of breaking up the "conventicle," as

he had boasted he would do, he was glad enough to sneak away and leave Wesley to finish his sermon.

The preaching of Wesley was of a much less florid and enthusiastic style than that of Whitefield, but the crowds that waited on him were equally large. In the plainest speech he talked the plainest theology, mixed with the most downright common sense, and the multitudes seemed to relish it quite as well as they did the brilliant rhetoric of his pupil; his word, also, was attended with greater spiritual power. Whitefield's sermons were always "collection sermons," while Wesley was wholly intent on teaching his hearers the lesson which he himself had so long been striving to learn, namely, how to save their souls. He also took frequent collections, it is true, but the financial feature was far less prominent under Wesley than it was under Whitefield.

If Wesley had held to his Holy Club notions, and simply taught the duties of religion, there would have been little or no complaint; but when he declared that without saving faith in Christ there was no salvation, even for the aristocracy and clergy, their indignation knew no bounds. One of his favourite texts was, "By grace are ye saved through faith," and he constantly insisted that it is the grace of God, and not their own efforts at goodness, which brings salvation within reach of any believer.

It was not long before both the pulpit and the press opened their guns upon him. He was denounced as "a restless deceiver of the people;" an "ignorant pretender;" a "new-fangled teacher, setting up his own fanatical conceits in opposition to the authority of God;" a "rapturous enthusiast;" a "Jesuit in disguise;" and, worst of all, "*a dissenter.*" "Everywhere," says Wesley, "we were represented as 'mad dogs,' and treated accordingly. We were stoned in the streets, and several times narrowly escaped with our lives. In sermons, newspapers, and pamphlets of all kinds, we were painted as unheard-of monsters, but this moved us not; we went on testifying salvation by faith both to small and great, and not counting our lives dear unto ourselves, so that we might finish our course with joy."

Whitefield, also, was treated to his full share of abuse, since his favourite doctrine of regeneration was no whit more

acceptable to the English pharisees than Wesley's teachings on salvation by faith. One Thomas Tucker, a young clergyman, in a bitter attack on Mr. Whitefield, accused him of "propagating blasphemies and enthusiastic notions which strike at the root of all religion, and make it the jest of those who sit in the seat of the scornful;" to which Wesley replied on Whitefield's behalf by advising Tucker not to meddle with controversy, since his talents were not equal to its management, and it would only entangle and bewilder him.

Charles Wesley and Ingham were also at work on the same lines, but for a time they appear to have escaped persecution under cover of the tumult which raged around the two chief apostles of the Methodist revival.

The next onslaught was much more authoritative and serious. In August, 1739, Edmund Gibson, Bishop of London, published a "Pastoral Letter by way of Caution against Lukewarmness on the one Hand, and Enthusiasm on the other," a large part of which was levelled against the Methodists, whom he accuses of claiming Divine inspiration in their preaching, and special Divine direction in their personal affairs; forgetting, no doubt, that both these benedictions were promised to believers in the Word of God. But the thing which troubled the Bishop the most was the fact that the Methodists boasted of "sudden and surprising effects as wrought by the Holy Ghost in consequence of their preaching," and that they endeavoured "to justify their own extraordinary methods of teaching by casting unworthy reflections upon the parochial clergy, as deficient in the discharge of their duty, and not instructing their people in the true doctrines of Christianity."

To this "Pastoral Letter" Whitefield wrote an answer, in a firm but respectful tone, turning the tables upon the Bishop, and charging him with propagating a "new gospel;" quoting from the Bishop's writings the statement that "good works are a necessary condition of our being justified in the sight of God;" while Whitefield reasserted that faith is the only necessary condition of justification, and that good works are the necessary fruit and consequences of a saved condition of soul. "This," says Whitefield, "is the doctrine of Jesus

Christ ; this is the doctrine of the Church of England ; and it is because the generality of the Church of England to-day fail to preach this doctrine that I am resolved, God being my helper, to continue, in season and out of season, to declare it unto all men, let the consequences as to my private person be what they will."

This writer also accuses Whitefield of "behaviour disgraceful to the Christian religion and to the ministerial office." "The clergy," says he, "have all refused him their pulpits, and the Lord Mayor the halls and markets of the city. He is a conceited boaster and heterodox intruder, whose next performance may be accompanied with a chorus of ten thousand sighs and groans, deepened with bassoons." In view of the alarming progress of Methodism, he makes his pitiful moan as follows :—

"In Yorkshire, by the preaching of the Methodists, the spirit of enthusiasm has so prevailed, that almost every man who can hammer out a chapter in the Bible has turned an expounder of the Scripture, to the great decay of industry and the almost ruin of the woollen manufacture, which seems threatened with destruction for want of hands to work it. Methodism has laid aside play-books and poems for Scripture phrases and hymns of its own composing. Its disciples are never easy but when they are in a church or expounding the Bible, which they can do off-handed from Genesis to Revelation with great ease and power. They have given away their finery to tattered beggars, resolving to wear the coarsest attire, and live upon the most ordinary diet. Several fine ladies, who used to wear French silks, French hoops four yards wide, bob-wigs, and white satin smock petticoats, are turned Methodists, and now wear stuff gowns !"

One Penruel, a curate of the Establishment, declared that of his personal knowledge John Wesley was a Papist ; but the Papists, for their part, denounced him ; so there was an end to that slander.

Whether the attacks of the press and the pulpit were intended to excite the mob against the Methodists, it is impossible to say ; but that these attacks were well calculated to that end cannot be denied. On one occasion a mob gathered from the worst purlieus in Bristol filled the streets

and alleys near the place where Wesley was preaching, and also filled the air with a perfect din of shouts, groans, and curses; but it was remarked that within a fortnight one of the chief rioters hanged himself, and a second, being seized with serious illness, sent for Mr. Wesley to come and pray with him.

There were, however, some godly men of high position who saw and felt the Divine power which accompanied the new revival, and who bore brave testimony to the faithfulness and soundness of its leaders; as proof of which take the following extract from a letter written by the Rev. Dr. Doddridge. Under the date of September 17, 1739, he writes concerning the two Wesleys, Whitefield, and Ingham:—

"The common people flock to hear them, and in most places hear gladly. They commonly preach once or twice every day, and expound the Scriptures in the evening to religious societies, who have their society rooms for that purpose." He then proceeds to give an account of his hearing Charles Wesley preach at Bristol, standing on a table, in a field. "He then," continues Dr. Doddridge, "preached about an hour in such a manner as I scarce ever heard any man preach. Though I have heard many a finer sermon, yet I think I never heard any man discover such evident signs of vehement desire. With unusual fervour he acquitted himself as an ambassador for Christ; and although he used no notes, nor had anything in his hand but a Bible, yet he delivered his thoughts in a rich, copious variety of expression, and with so much propriety that I could not observe anything incoherent through the whole performance, which he concluded with singing, prayer, and the usual benediction."

Thus in various ways the Methodist revival was promoted, and its leaders vindicated and protected, both by the praise of godly men and the powers of the upper world.

The first Methodist house of worship was that erected by John Wesley at Bristol in 1739, for the accommodation of the Nicholas Street and Baldwin Street "Societies." It was not dignified by the name of "church," or even "chapel," but was simply called "The New Room."

More familiar to readers of Methodist history, however, is the first Methodist preaching-house in London. This was the famous "Old Foundry," the purchase of which Mr. Wesley

undertook on his own sole responsibility, and which, as the cradle of London Methodism, deserves a somewhat minute description.

In November, 1739, Mr. Wesley was invited by two gentlemen, who were strangers to him, to preach in an unused and dilapidated building in London, near the Moorfields; where, on Sunday, November 11th, he preached to two large congregations. In the morning, at eight o'clock, there were about five thousand, and at five in the evening, seven or eight thousand persons present. The place had formerly been used as a government foundry for the casting of cannon, but somewhat more than twenty years before this a terrible explosion had occurred, which blew off the roof and otherwise injured the building, killing and wounding a considerable number of workmen. This accident led to the abandonment of the Old Foundry and the removal of the works to Woolwich.

The purchase-money was £115, but the place being "a vast uncouth heap of ruins," a large sum additional to this had to be expended in needful repairs. To meet this expenditure some friends lent him the purchase money, and offered to pay subscriptions, some four, some six, and some ten shillings a year towards the liquidation of the debt. In three years these subscriptions amounted to about £480, leaving, however, a balance of nearly £300, for which Wesley was still responsible. From this it would seem that the entire cost of the Old Foundry was about £800.

The bandroom was behind the chapel, on the ground floor, some eighty feet long and twenty feet wide, and accommodated about three hundred persons. Here the classes met; here, in winter, the five o'clock morning service was conducted; and here were held, at two o'clock on Wednesdays and Fridays, weekly meetings for prayer and intercession. The north end of the room was used for a school, and was fitted up with desks; and at the south end was "The Book Room," for the sale of Wesley's publications.

Over the bandroom were apartments for Wesley, in which his mother died, and at the end of the chapel was a dwelling-house for his domestics and assistant preachers

while attached to the whole was a small building used as a coach-house and stable.

The "Societies" in London, in whose fellowship the Methodists of this period lived and laboured, were at first wholly composed of pious Episcopalians and Moravians, chiefly the latter; but a large number of persons who had been converted under the preaching of Whitefield and the Wesleys were soon incorporated into them, and frequent dissensions arose between the older and younger members, which John Wesley, who was now the recognized leader among them, was oftentimes called upon to settle. He could not be absent even for a few weeks without finding a quarrel on his return, either concerning the peculiar teachings of some newly arrived Moravians from Germany, or because of some petty personal grievance; or, it might be, a rebellion against the authority of Charles Wesley, who in the absence of his elder brother felt the great responsibility of its management, and who, from first to last, had a decided talent for making trouble; or perhaps the chronic jealousy of some of the Germans had broken out into open war against the Wesleys, and held that as new-comers and novices they should be more in subjection; while the English converts fought for the rights and prerogatives of the Methodists under whose preaching they had been converted.

On the 20th of July, 1740, Mr. Wesley went to one of the Fetter Lane love-feasts, and at its conclusion read a paper stating the errors into which the Moravians had fallen, and concluding thus: "I believe these assertions to be flatly contrary to the Word of God. I have warned you hereof again and again, and besought you to turn back to the 'law and the testimony.' I have borne with you long, hoping you would turn. But, as I find you more and more confirmed in the error of your ways, nothing now remains but that I should give you up to God. You that are of the same judgment, follow me." Without saying more he then silently withdrew, eighteen or nineteen of the society following him. So ended John Wesley's connection with the Moravian Church, in which he had learned so much and laboured so well.

An attempt was made by Count Zinzendorf, the following year, to bring Mr. Wesley back into the Moravian field, but

without avail. The Count, with his usual manner of authority, charged Wesley with changing his religion, quarrelling with the brethren, and teaching false views of Christian perfection. But Wesley had now outgrown the Moravian leading-strings. The Count, whom he had once obeyed with abject submission, could no longer play the Pope over him; and as for the Moravian theology, Wesley says: "Waiving their odd and affected phrases; their weak, mean, silly, childish expressions; their crude, confused, and undigested notions; and their whims, unsupported either by Scripture or sound reason, I find three grand, unretracted errors running through almost all their books, namely, universal salvation, antinomianism, and a kind of new, reformed quietism." No wonder the proposed reunion failed.

From the Fetter Lane love-feast Wesley and the seceders proceeded to the Foundry, where, on the 23rd day of July, 1740, he formed them into the first "United Society," on a plan much resembling those from whose fellowship he had departed. There were twenty-five men and forty-eight women in attendance. With this little band of Methodists the world was to be overrun.

"In the latter end of the year 1739," says Mr. Wesley, "eight or ten persons came to me in London, and desired that I should spend some time with them in prayer, and advise them how to 'flee from the wrath to come:' this was the rise of the 'United Societies.'" It would appear that these eight or ten persons were members of the Fetter Lane Society, who were disturbed, and, likely enough, disgusted, by the continued dissensions and the vagaries of doctrine which they found therein; and it would be a natural solution of the problem of different dates, which would otherwise be confusing, to fix this voluntary action on the part of these eight or ten persons as the first suggestion to Mr. Wesley of the necessity of a separate organization, which, a few months later, was effected by the establishment of the first United Society at the Foundry.

In the Moravian societies, no less than in the State Church, it was held to be a sin and a shame for any but an ordained man to preach; though in the Moravian societies he might relate his experience, and incidentally bring in a good deal

of Scripture exposition therewith. But in the year 1739 Mr. Wesley had made the acquaintance of the Welsh evangelist, Howell Harris, a man who, with no ordination whatever, had been blessed with a success in the preaching of the Gospel in Wales almost equal to that which had attended the preaching of the Methodists in England. This Welshman appears to have been the first man in the United Kingdom who caught the idea of preaching the Gospel on the sole authority of the Author of the Gospel, instead of on the authority of a self-constituted Church.

Harris first commenced visiting from house to house in his own native parish, and in neighbouring ones, about the same time that the Wesleys reached Georgia. Up to this period the morals of the Welsh were deplorably corrupt; and among both rich and poor, ministers and people, gluttony, drunkenness, and licentiousness were common. In the parish churches the name of Christ was hardly ever uttered, and in 1736 there were only six dissenting chapels throughout the whole of northern Wales.

Crowds began to gather about him, and, almost without knowing it, Harris began to preach. The magistrates and clergy threatened him; but their threats failed to silence him. For a maintenance he set up a school, and meantime continued preaching. Numbers were convinced of sin, and these the young preacher, only twenty-two years of age, formed into small societies. At the end of 1737 persecuting malice ejected him from his school; but, instead of silencing the preacher, it led him to preach more than ever. He now gave himself entirely to the work of an evangelist, and henceforth generally delivered three or four, and sometimes five or six, sermons daily to crowded congregations. A widespread reformation followed. Public diversions became unfashionable, and religion became the theme of common conversation. Thus Howell Harris was an itinerant preacher at least a year and a half before Whitefield and Wesley; and, as the herald of hundreds more who were to follow, he met the fiercest persecutions with an undaunted soul and an unflinching face. Parsons and country squires menaced him, and mobs swore and flung stones and sticks at him; but he calmly pursued his way, labouring almost alone

in his own isolated sphere until he met with Whitefield in the town of Cardiff in 1739. Whitefield says he found him "a burning and shining light, a barrier against profanity and immorality, and an indefatigable promoter of the Gospel of Christ. During the last three years he had preached almost twice every day, for three or four hours together, had visited seven counties, established thirty societies, and the good work was growing and spreading under his hands."

It is not quite proper, however, to reckon Harris as the first *Methodist* lay preacher; that honour belongs to John Cennick, the son of an English Quaker, who was brought up in the quiet religious ways of that excellent people, but who, on leaving home to learn the trade of carpenter in London, fell into the snares which always infest great cities, and soon became a gay young man of the world.

In 1735, John was convinced of sin while walking in Cheapside, and at once left off song-singing, card-playing, and attending theatres. Sometimes he wished to go into a popish monastery, to spend his life in devout retirement; at other times he longed to live in a cave, sleeping on fallen leaves, and feeding on forest fruits. He fasted long and often, and prayed nine times every day. He was afraid of seeing ghosts, and terribly apprehensive lest he should meet the devil. Fancying dry bread too great an indulgence for so great a sinner as himself, he began to feed on potatoes, acorns, crabs, and grass, and often wished he could live upon roots and herbs. At length, on September 6th, 1737, he found peace with God, and went on his way rejoicing. Like Howell Harris, he at once commenced preaching, and also began to write hymns, a number of which Charles Wesley corrected for the press.

In May, 1739, on the recommendation of Mr. Whitefield, Cennick was placed in charge of the New Kingswood School, in which office he also rendered good service as a preacher, and gained strong hold upon the hearts of the colliers, as well as of their children. It was not long, however, before he began to be afflicted with certain Calvinistic notions, on account of which he regarded it as either his privilege or his duty, or both, to quarrel with Mr. Wesley, against whom he headed a fierce opposition, based wholly upon differences of

theological opinion, and, as a result, the work of revival in the region of Bristol languished for many years.

Thomas Maxfield comes next in the notable army of lay preachers ; a young man of fair talents and deep piety, who, in 1740, came to Mr. Wesley in London, and desired to assist him as a "son in the Gospel," and whom Mr. Wesley appointed to be the leader of the Society at the Foundry. Preaching, however, was no part of his duty. But the people were hungry for the bread of life, and young Maxfield showed a rare skill in breaking it to them. His efforts as an expositor of Scripture became more and more attractive, and presently it was reported to Mr. Wesley, then at Bristol, that the young man he had appointed simply as a leader of the Foundry Society had taken it upon himself to preach ! On the receipt of these strange tidings Wesley hastened up to London to put a stop to such wickedness and folly ; but on mentioning his intention to his mother, who, after the death of her husband, had removed to London, that wise, strong-souled woman replied : "Take care what you do. Thomas Maxfield is as truly called of God to preach the Gospel as ever you were."

Mr. Wesley was now in a dilemma. He believed a great deal in the traditions of his Church ; he also had great faith in the Christian judgment of his mother, whose words seemed to impress themselves upon him with more than human authority. It was as if the Lord had spoken to him by the mouth of this prophetess ; therefore, laying aside his prejudices, He examined the young man as to his gifts and graces, and, instead of extinguishing him as a preacher, he promoted him to a kind of lay pastorate of the souls at the Foundry, thus establishing the first precedent of that vast system of "appointments" which has since held such a prominent place in Methodist economy.

CHAPTER VI.

THE CALVINISTIC CONTROVERSY, ETC.

OPINIONS! opinions! What crimes have been committed in thy name, especially in the name of theological opinions!

It is appalling to discover how little good, and how great evil, has come of those theoretical disputes upon which good men have exhausted so much talent and time; while the small importance which the Head of the Church seems to attach to any sort of inferential theology appears in the fact that He carries on His work of saving penitent sinners, both by means of, and in spite of, long-cherished and well-defended religious opinions.

Whitefield, like his teachers, the Wesleys, was a believer in free grace until he went to America; but at Northampton he met the great Dr. Jonathan Edwards, who taught him the theology of Calvin, and the young evangelist, having a better voice for rhetoric than brain for logic, was thereby very much beguiled. But by means of the Calvinist Edwards and Whitefield the Lord managed to carry on His work of saving sinners, as well as by the Arminian John Wesley, though by no means to the same ultimate extent. In their opinions these men were as wide apart as the poles; but down underneath their opinions they had some real faith, some true religion, which the Lord could make use of in carrying on His kingdom without stopping to correct the one or take sides with the other; though it is plain enough, from the Divine development of His Church and His Word, which side of this question He favours.

With his usual impetuosity, Whitefield plunged soul and body into the Calvinistic arena, and at once announced his doctrinal conversion in letters to his English friends. Wesley, who was quite as dogmatic as his pupil, besides being a much

better logician and theologian, took up the case with great spirit; wrote some vigorous letters with a view to helping his young pupil out of his delusions, and preached and published a powerful sermon against Predestination, which was the signal for a general theological war. For a time these old friends maintained pleasant personal relations in spite of the great divergence in their theology; but the debate waxed so hot, and attracted so many new combatants, that for years there was much bitterness between them, all co-operation ceased, and a complete separation, and almost estrangement, ensued. Writing from Savannah, under date of March 26, 1740, to Mr. Wesley, Whitefield says:—

“MY HONOURED FRIEND AND BROTHER,—For once hearken to a child, who is willing to wash your feet. I beseech you, by the mercies of God in Christ Jesus our Lord, if you would have my love confirmed towards you, write no more to me about misrepresentations wherein we differ. If possible, I am ten thousand times more convinced of the doctrine of *election* and the *final* perseverance of those that are truly in Christ, than when I saw you last. You think otherwise. Why, then, should we dispute, when there is no probability of convincing? Will it not, in the end, destroy brotherly love, and insensibly take from us that cordial union and sweetness of soul which I pray God may always subsist between us? How glad would the enemies of the Lord be to see us divided! How many would rejoice, should I join and make a party against you! How would the cause of our common Master suffer by our raising disputes about particular points of doctrine! *Honoured sir*, let us offer salvation freely to all by the blood of Jesus; and whatever light God has communicated to us, let us freely communicate to others. I have lately read the life of Luther, and think it in nowise to his honour that the last part of his life was so much taken up in disputing with Zwinglius and others, who in all probability equally loved the Lord Jesus, notwithstanding they might differ from him in all other points. Let this, dear sir, be a caution to us. I hope it will be to me; for, provoke me to it as much as you please, I intend not to enter lists of controversy with you on the points wherein we differ. Only, I pray to God that the more you *judge me*, the more

I may *love you*, and learn to desire no one's approbation but that of my Lord and Master Jesus Christ."

The publication of Mr. Wesley's sermons against predestination aroused the wrath of the Calvinists to fever heat. In the midst of the storm of sermons and pamphlets which it called forth, Mr. Whitefield returned a second time from America, and, perceiving that the theological gulf between himself and his former friends was now impassable, he began to open his mouth against them. In his reply to Mr. Wesley's sermon, he says :—

"I frankly acknowledge I believe the doctrine of reprobation in this view, that God intends to give saving grace through Jesus Christ only to a certain number, and that the rest of mankind, after the fall of Adam, being justly left of God to continue in sin, will at last suffer that eternal death which is its proper wages." Nevertheless, he argues that preachers of the Gospel are bound to preach promiscuously to all, since they cannot possibly know who are the elect and who are the reprobate ; and he defends the justice which dooms millions of unborn sinners to everlasting burnings, by showing that this was the fate which all mankind had justly incurred by reason of the sin of Adam, and that, instead of being an act of injustice on the part of God to destroy the many, it was an act of special grace on His part to save the few. The Bible statement that "the Lord is loving to every man, and His mercy is over all His works," Whitefield explains by showing that this refers to His *general* and not His *saving* mercy ; and he goes on to deny the doctrine of Universal Redemption as set forth by Wesley, declaring it to be the highest reproach upon the dignity of the Son of God, challenging Wesley to make good the assertion that Christ died for them that perish, on the ground that if all were universally redeemed, it would follow that all must finally be saved.

Whatever may be said of the mysteries of the Calvinistic system in general, they were evidently too wonderful for Mr. Whitefield.

This wide difference of opinion naturally wrought an estrangement between these old friends, both of whom, with intemperate zeal, entered into this war of words, and the next

year Mr. Wesley makes this entry in his Journal, under the date of April 28, 1741 :—

“Having heard much of Mr. Whitefield’s unkind behaviour since his return from Georgia, I went to him to hear him speak for himself, that I might know how to judge. I much approved of his plainness of speech. He told me, he and I preached two different gospels, and therefore he not only would not join with, or give, me the right hand of fellowship, but was resolved publicly to preach against me and my brother, wheresoever he preached at all. Mr. Hall (who went with me) put him in mind of the promise he had made but a few days before, that, whatever his private opinion was, he would never publicly preach against us. He said that promise was only an effect of human weakness, and he was now of another mind.”

On one occasion, when the two friends met in a large social gathering, Whitefield mounted his hobby, and spoke largely and valiantly in defence of his favourite system. Wesley, on the other hand, was silent till all the company were gone, when, turning to the spurred and belted controversial knight, he quietly remarked, “Brother, are you aware of what you have done to-night?”

“Yes,” said Whitefield, “I have defended truth.”

“You have tried to prove,” replied Wesley, “that God is worse than the devil ; for the devil can only *tempt* a man to sin ; but if what you have said be true, God *forces* a man to sin ; and therefore, on your system, God is worse than the devil.”

Howell Harris, the Welshman, and John Cennick, the Kingswood schoolmaster, both took sides with the Calvinists. The former, in writing a letter, says :—

“I have been long waiting to see if brother John and Charles should receive further light, or be silent, and not oppose election and perseverance ; but finding no hope of this, I begin to be staggered how to act towards them. I plainly see that we preach two gospels. My dear brother, deal faithfully with brother John and Charles. If you like, you may read this letter to them. We are free in Wales from the hellish infection.” What there is particularly “hellish” about the doctrine of free grace, this enthusiastic

predestinarian does not minutely point out. To an unprejudiced mind there would naturally appear to be more "hell" in the Calvinistic than in the Arminian view.

The Methodist revival was now only just begun ; but already there were two sorts of Methodists, one under the lead of Whitefield, the other under the lead of Wesley ; both believing in Jesus Christ as the Redeemer and Saviour of men, and in the Holy Ghost as the Sanctifier and Comforter of believers, but separated from each other by a set of inferences falsely drawn from isolated texts ; inferences which explained away the universal love of God ; "opinions" which, if they were true, could have no possible value either to the elect or reprobate, and whose only purpose seems to have been to confuse the minds and sour the tempers of all persons to whose knowledge they might chance to come. One of these parties grew into what was called the "Lady Huntingdon Connection," after the name of Mr. Whitefield's chief patroness—a Christian communion of which comparatively few people have ever heard ; the other has overrun the English-speaking world.

Thus according to the faith of each was it done unto him. Whitefield accepted the Gospel as God's plan to save a few, and to him was given a small spiritual family in the Lord. Wesley saw in the Gospel a plan to save the many, and his spiritual household, like that of Abraham, has become as the stars of heaven for multitude.

It is a pitiful spectacle to see a great revivalist, with two nations waiting on his ministrations, wielding the powers of the world to come, and bringing sinners by multitudes to salvation—to see such a man turned from the work of preaching the Gospel to the fruitless and foolish task of setting forth what one of the great Calvinistic divines calls "the secret will of God."

Has Jehovah from all eternity determined to save just so many of the human race, and to pass by all the rest ?

Whitefield answers, "Yes." Wesley answers, "No."

"But," says Whitefield, "God teaches, my friends, that election is true."

"And God teaches me to preach and print against it," answers Wesley.

Alas, for the estrangement of these apostolic men! If they had lived in our day, the one would have seen his newly espoused "opinions," along with other rubbish of the same sort, thrust into out-of-the-way corners in the libraries of theological seminaries, while the other would have discovered that it is possible for Calvinists and Arminians to preach and pray harmoniously together, simply by keeping to the things which are plainly laid down in the Gospel, and leaving all mere inferences thereon to take their own chances of living or dying.

Among the distinguished persons who were led to a true faith in Christ through the labours of the Oxford Methodists was Selina, the Countess of Huntingdon.

During a severe illness she had been led to consecrate herself to the Lord, and on her recovery she faithfully fulfilled her promise by a long life of benevolence and devotion. Through the influence of her sister-in-law, Lady Margaret Hastings, afterward the wife of Ingham, of the Holy Club, Lady Selina became attached to the Methodists, and although she was an enthusiastic Churchwoman, a member of the aristocracy, and could even boast of having royal blood in her veins, she became, greatly to the disgust of the Earl, her husband, a frequent attendant of the Moravian Societies in London.

On Mr. Wesley's separation from the Fetter Lane Society she attached herself to his party, and invited him to preach in her house; but when Wesley and Whitefield fell out, because of their differences in theology, Lady Huntingdon, being a Calvinist, sided with Whitefield, and at length, by her munificent gifts, as well as on account of her piety and talents, she became the acknowledged head of a little sect of Methodists who did not believe in free grace.

After the rupture between Wesley and his pupil, Whitefield had caused a Tabernacle to be erected for his own use not far from Mr. Wesley's Foundry; an arrangement well calculated to promote all sorts of ill-will between these former friends and the two congregations of their respective followers; but the Countess, who appears to have had almost a controlling influence with Whitefield—whom she afterward appointed one of her chaplains—induced him to seek for a

reconciliation with Wesley, and in consequence thereof the breach was healed. The two men held a union service at Whitefield's Tabernacle, at which the Lord's Supper was celebrated by over a thousand communicants ; and the brotherly love thus restored bound their hearts together to the day of their death. Sometimes the old fire would suddenly blaze up for a moment, when they began to talk of their respective "opinions," but Whitefield would smother it with his favourite saying, "Well, brother, let us agree to disagree."

After her husband's death the Countess devoted herself wholly to a religious life; her house, at Chelsea, near London, became the head-quarters of a revival movement among the nobility ; many ladies of rank were converted, meetings for prayer and the reading of the Scriptures were held at their mansions, and some of the leading men of the kingdom occasionally attended the preaching of Whitefield, both at his Tabernacle and at the house of his patroness. Only a very few of them could be persuaded to renounce the world, the flesh, and the devil ; but they were all agreed that Lady Huntingdon's young chaplain was the most wonderful preacher they had ever heard.

This elect lady not only devoted herself, her time, and her influence to God, but what was more rare, her ample fortune also. She sold her country-seats, her jewels, her elegant equipages, and other appendages of a fashionable and titled lady, and devoted the proceeds to the purchase of theatres, halls, and dilapidated chapels, which she caused to be fitted up for public worship conducted by some of her chaplains.

In order to provide a ministry for these chapels, Lady Huntingdon erected a theological school at Trevecca, in Wales, and called to its presidency the saintly Fletcher, vicar of Madely. Here any young man, who was truly converted and ready to give himself to the work of preaching the Gospel, might receive board, tuition, and one suit of clothes a year, all at the college's expense. At first no theological tests were imposed ; but afterward, as the Calvinistic controversy grew hotter and more bitter, the school was made so strictly an institution of the elect, that no believer in free grace could be either a teacher or a pupil therein. Fletcher, on this

account, resigned his charge of the school, which, as might have been expected, never rose above mediocrity.

During her life the Countess is said to have bestowed more than £100,000 in works of religion and charity, and at her death, in her eighty-fourth year, June 17, 1791, she bequeathed £40,000 for special benefactions, and the remainder of her fortune she devoted to the support of the sixty-four chapels which she had helped to build in England, Ireland, and Wales.

Like Wesley, Lady Huntingdon was greatly attached to the Established Church, but in order to retain the control of the chapels which she had built she was forced to avail herself of the Act of Toleration, and thus these chapels became dissenting meeting-houses, in which her episcopalian friends would no longer preach or worship. After her death all connection between them was dissolved, and, instead of a little system, they became so many independent chapels.

Like every other step in the progress of early Methodism, the establishment of “classes” was plainly providential.

The number of members in Wesley’s United Societies had now greatly increased. That at the Foundry contained, in the year 1742, about eleven hundred members. There was also a large Society at Bristol, and many smaller ones scattered over England and Wales. In the county of Yorkshire alone there were sixty Societies, which had been established by Wesley’s companion in Georgia, who shortly afterward joined the Moravians, and soon faded out of sight. Hitherto, Wesley and his brother, with some little assistance from the other Oxford Methodists, had exercised a pastoral oversight over these Societies; but in February, 1742, an accident led to an important addition to the simple Methodist system.

In the erection of the “New Room” at Bristol, the first of all the Wesleyan preaching houses, a large debt had been incurred, and on the date above mentioned some of the principal members of the Bristol Society met together to consult how to raise the money to pay it. One of them stood up and said, “Let every member of the Society give a penny a week till the debt is paid.” Another answered, “Many of them are poor, and cannot afford to do it.” “Then,” said the former “put eleven of the poorest with

me ; and if they can give anything, well ; I will call on them weekly ; and if they can give nothing, I will give for them as well as for myself. And each of you call on eleven of your neighbours weekly, receive what they give, and make up what is wanting." "It was done," writes Wesley ; "and in awhile some of these informed me they found such and such an one did not live as he ought. It struck me immediately, 'This is the thing, the very thing, we have wanted so long.'"

Accordingly he called together these weekly collectors of money to pay the debt of the Bristol Chapel, and desired each, in addition to collecting money, to make particular inquiry into the behaviour of the members whom they visited. They did so. Many disorderly walkers were detected, and thus the Society was purged of unworthy members.

Within six weeks after this, on March 25, Wesley introduced the same plan in London, where he had long found it difficult to become acquainted with all the members personally. He requested several earnest and sensible men to meet him, to whom he explained his difficulty. They all agreed that to come to sure, thorough knowledge of each member, there could be no better way than to divide the Society into classes, like those at Bristol. Wesley at once appointed as leaders those in whom he could most confide ; and thus, in three years after their first organization, the United Societies were regularly divided into classes.

At first the leaders visited each member of their classes at their own houses ; but for convenience it was presently arranged that the class should assemble once a week, at a time and place most convenient for the whole, an hour being spent chiefly in conversing with those present, one by one, the leader beginning and ending each meeting with singing and prayer.

The Quarterly Visitation, or the "Quarterly Meeting," as it is usually called in the present day, was another providential method developed by the circumstances and necessities of the early Methodist Societies. The appointment of leaders over the classes devolved upon Mr. Wesley, but the difficulty of finding suitable persons in sufficient numbers induced him to arrange to meet the classes himself, if possible, as often as

four times a year. The performance of this duty made him, of necessity, an itinerant, and from this time to almost the day of his death John Wesley was the greatest traveller in the United Kingdom. As the number of the Societies increased, it became impossible for him to meet all the classes himself, and thus the duty was devolved upon his helpers; but the coming of the preacher, who, if he was not Wesley himself, was his personal representative, was regarded as an important event in the life of the simple-minded people of which the first Societies were chiefly composed; and this quarterly visitation became one of the strongest bonds by which the Societies were held together.

In the year 1742, Mr. Wesley extended his missionary journeys into the north of England, and on the 28th of May reached the smoky metropolis of Newcastle-upon-Tyne, where, even after his Kingswood experiences, he was greatly shocked at the degradation and wickedness of the people. Drunkenness and swearing were habitual, and even the mouths of the little children were filled with oaths and curses.

On Sunday morning, at seven o'clock, Wesley and his travelling companion, John Taylor, took their stand in Sandgate, the poorest and most abandoned part of the town, and began to sing the Old Hundredth Psalm. Presently the people began to come together to see what was the matter, and about the time Wesley had finished his preaching, which followed the singing, he had a congregation of from twelve to fifteen hundred persons, some of whom he declares to have been the worst and most profane of any barbarians he had ever addressed. Concerning the profanity of this people, it was said “they used the language as though they had received a liberal education in the regions of woe.” Wesley’s text on this occasion was, “He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon Him; and with His stripes we are healed.”

When the service was ended, the people stood gaping with astonishment, upon which the preacher said, “If you desire to know who I am, my name is John Wesley. At five in the evening, with God’s help, I design to preach here again.”

At five o'clock he again took his stand on the hill opposite Keelman's Hospital,* while just before him swarmed the denizens of Sandgate and the crowded alleys by the river Tyne. In Moorfields and Kennington Common Wesley had preached to congregations estimated at from ten to twenty thousand people, but on this occasion he preached to the largest as well as to the wildest crowd he had ever seen, who listened to him respectfully, and after the preaching pressed upon him for a nearer view, or perhaps a shake of the hand, and were, as he says, "ready to tread him under foot out of pure love and kindness."

In June of this year Mr. Wesley made a visit to his old home at Epworth. The parish clergyman was a miserable man of dissolute habits, who hated the Methodists with all his might, and on the appearance of their leader in his parish he poured out his wrath against them in two discourses, which Wesley describes as two of the bitterest and vilest sermons he ever heard. He was desirous of preaching to his old neighbours, and, being shut out of the church, he resolved to preach in the churchyard—a proceeding proper enough on general principles, but a plain breach of the law of the Prayer Book—and taking his stand upon the broad, low platform which marked the grave of his father, he preached with wonderful power to the crowds that gathered about him.

During the week of his visit to Epworth he preached from this strange pulpit every day. On one occasion his voice was drowned by the cries of the penitents; several persons dropped down as if they had been dead, and the quiet old churchyard was turned into an "inquiry-room," in which many sinners found peace with God, and which then resounded with songs of joy, thanksgiving, and praise.

John Whitelamb, Wesley's brother-in-law, at that time the curate at Wroote, who heard him preach at Epworth, says, in writing to him, "Your presence creates an awe, as if you were an inhabitant of another world."

* "Keelman" is Newcastle-English for "bargeman;" this class of persons being very numerous at Newcastle, where they are employed on the heavy boats or barges used in transporting coal.

But Epworth was of old a place given to religious persecution, and no wonder that among the descendants of people who could burn the house of their clergyman at midnight because they did not like his politics, some should be found who would annoy a Methodist because they did not like his religion.

There were a good many conversions among the Epworth sinners, but some of them were not allowed to live in peace. On one occasion a whole waggon load of them were arrested and carried before a magistrate.

"With what offence are these people charged?" asked the squire.

"They pretend to be better than other people," said one of their accusers.

"And they pray from morning till night," said another.

"They have *convarted* my wife," said another; "but," he added, as a grudging admission of the truth, "till she went among them she had *such* a tongue, but now she is as quiet as a lamb."

"Take them back," said the justice, "take them back, and let them convert all the scolds in town."

After the death of his father, John Wesley, like a dutiful and affectionate son, assumed the support of his mother, and on the completion of the repairs at the Foundry, removed her to a comfortable home which he had fitted up therein. The incident concerning her defence of young Maxfield, the lay preacher, shows that she took an active interest in the affairs of the Society; and the constant presence of such a woman at the head-quarters of Methodism could not fail to be of great advantage.

Soon after his visit to Epworth, Wesley heard that his mother was seriously ill, and hastened home, only to find her just on the borders of heaven.

Her death and burial are thus recorded in his Journal, under date of Friday, July 23, 1743:—

"About three in the afternoon I went to see my mother, and found her change was near. I sat down on the bedside; she was in her last conflict, unable to speak, but I believe quite sensible. Her look was calm and serene, and her eyes fixed upward, while we commended her soul to God. From

three to four the silver cord was loosing, and the wheel breaking at the cistern ; and then, without any struggle, or sigh, or groan, her soul was set at liberty. We stood round the bed, and fulfilled her last request, uttered a little before she lost her speech, ‘ Children, as soon as I am released, sing a psalm of praise to God.’

“ Sunday, August 1. Almost an innumerable company of people being gathered together, about five in the afternoon I committed to the earth the body of my mother, to sleep with her father’s. The portion of Scripture from which I afterward spoke was, ‘ I saw a great white throne, and Him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away, and there was found no place for them. And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God ; and the books were opened. And the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works.’ It was one of the most solemn assemblies I ever saw, or expect to see, on this side eternity. We set up a plain stone at the head of her grave, inscribed with the following words :—

HERE LIES THE BODY OF

MRS. SUSANNAH WESLEY,

THE YOUNGEST AND LAST SURVIVING DAUGHTER OF

DR. SAMUEL ANNESLEY.

The place of Mrs. Wesley’s burial was at Bunhill Fields, now in the midst of that vast aggregation of towns, called London ; a place which is also memorable as containing the tomb of John Bunyan.

In the year 1869 an appeal was made to the “ boys of England,” in the columns of one of the English religious papers, for funds to restore the tomb of Daniel De Foe, whose body also lies in Bunhill Fields. Shortly afterward a similar appeal appeared in the *Methodist Recorder* to the “ mothers and daughters of Methodism,” to erect a suitable monument over the grave of Susannah Wesley, “ the mother of the Revs. John and Charles Wesley ; the former of whom was, under God, the founder of the Societies of the people

called Methodists." This appeal met with a hearty response, and the monument has been erected; not, however, in the Bunhill Fields Burial Ground, but on a much more eligible site, in front of the City Road Chapel, and immediately adjoining the house in which her most distinguished son lived and died. The inscription is as follows:—

HERE LIES THE BODY OF
MRS. SUSANNAH WESLEY,
WIDOW OF THE REV. SAMUEL WESLEY, M.A.,
(LATE RECTOR OF EPWORTH, LINCOLNSHIRE,)
WHO DIED JULY 23, 1742,
AGED 73 YEARS.

SHE WAS THE YOUNGEST DAUGHTER OF THE
REV. SAMUEL ANNESLEY, D.D., EJECTED BY THE ACT
OF UNIFORMITY FROM THE RECTORY OF ST. GILES'S,
CRIPPLEGATE, AUG. 24, 1662.

SHE WAS THE MOTHER OF NINETEEN CHILDREN,
OF WHOM THE MOST EMINENT WERE THE
REV. JOHN AND CHARLES WESLEY;
THE FORMER OF WHOM WAS UNDER GOD
THE FOUNDER OF THE SOCIETIES OF THE PEOPLE
CALLED METHODISTS.

IN SURE AND CERTAIN HOPE TO RISE.
AND CLAIM HER MANSION IN THE SKIES,
A CHRISTIAN HERE HER FLESH LAID DOWN,
THE CROSS EXCHANGING FOR A CROWN.

CHAPTER VII.

STORMY DAYS FOR METHODISM.

THE southern section of the county of Staffordshire, between Wolverhampton and Birmingham, known as "The Black Country," is notable in Methodist history as the scene of some of the most violent persecutions.

In 1743 Charles Wesley made a preaching tour through these almost infernal regions, in which already there had been a considerable awakening. At Wednesbury he found a society of more than three hundred members, many of whom had been reformed from the wildest and wickedest ways of life, but the town was full of people who raged against the movement like untamed beasts of the forest.

He had need of courage who should venture to preach under the auspices of this Society. But Charles Wesley was a brave man. Moreover, the success of his brother and Mr. Whitefield in open-air preaching, and the evident favour of the Lord which had attended these efforts, had converted him to that idea ; and now there was no more courageous open-air preacher in England than the high-church, poetical Charles Wesley. Having met his brother at Wednesbury, he determined to preach in the neighbouring town of Walsal, and a considerable number of the brethren formed a procession, with Wesley at their head, and marched thither, singing as they went, while the rabble hooted at them as they passed through the streets.

Charles Wesley took his stand on the steps of Walsal Market-house, with the faithful Wednesbury Society about him. Presently a mob was raised, which bore down upon the little company like a flood, with the intention of sweeping them away. Finding that the Methodists were inclined to stand their ground, the mob next commenced to throw stones, many of which struck the preacher, but failed to stop

his discourse. When he was near the close thereof, the surging multitude pressed so hard upon him as to push him from his platform ; he, however, regained his feet in time to save himself from being trampled to death, and stretched out his hands to pronounce the benediction, when he was again thrown down. A third time he regained his position and proceeded to return thanks, as was his custom, after which he passed through the midst of the rioters, who were raging on every hand, but, strangely enough, no one laid a hand upon him.

From Walsal Charles Wesley proceeded to Sheffield, where, he says, “Hell from beneath was moved to oppose us.” The house in which he was preaching being in danger of destruction by the mob, in order to save the house he announced that he would preach out of doors ; whereupon the crowd followed him to the place chosen for this purpose, and he finished his sermon under a shower of stones.

After preaching he returned to the Methodist house where he had been entertained, which was also used as a preaching place, and here the mob continued their violence through the whole night. Wesley would have gone out to meet them, in order to save the home of his friend from destruction, but he was not permitted to do so, lest it should cost him his life. The rabble raged all night, and by morning they had pulled down one end of the house, but no personal injury was received either by Mr. Wesley or his friends.

This disgraceful tumult he ascribes to the sermons which were preached against the Methodists by the clergy of the Sheffield churches.

Charles Wesley often acknowledged himself to be constitutionally a timid man ; but there was nothing he feared so much as to offend his own conscience ; and under the inspiration of duty this lamb became a lion, wholly insensible to fear by reason of the overmastering religious fervour which lifted him above all sense of what the world calls danger.

It was no unusual experience for the Wesleys to find a mob waiting for them on their arrival at the various towns on their route ; indeed, a peaceable quarterly visitation in the Black Country or Cornwall was regarded as rather an exception to the rule. On one occasion, while preaching in

the chapel at St. Ives, the place was attacked by the mob, its windows smashed in, its seats torn up, and the fragments borne away, with the shutters, poor-box, and all but the stone walls. Wesley bade the people stand still and see the salvation of God, resolving to continue with them until the end of the strife. After raging about an hour, the ruffians fell to quarrelling among themselves, broke the head of the town clerk, who was their captain, and drove one another out of the room. Having kept the field, the Society gave thanks for the victory. "The word of God runs and is glorified," writes Wesley, "but the devil rages horribly."

The converted miners were as fearless in duty as they had been in fights and brawls. Wesley says, "I cannot find one of this people who fears those that can kill the body only." Hereby some of their bitterest persecutors were conquered, or won by their meek endurance, and became standard-bearers of the cross among them.

Similar assaults were made in other places. At Poole a drunken hearer attempted to drag the preacher from his stand, and a church-warden heading the rabble drove him and his congregation out of the parish. The Church record bears to this day an entry of the score at the village inn of drinks furnished to the mob "for driving out the Methodists." A strong man behind Wesley aimed several blows with a heavy club at his head, but they were all turned aside, Wesley says he knew not how. He was struck a powerful blow on the chest, and another on the mouth, making the blood gush forth; but he declares he felt no more pain from either than if he had merely been touched with as:

The noise on every side, he says, was like a roaring sea. Some cried, "Knock his brains out!" "Down with him!" "Kill him!" "Crucify him!" Others shouted, "No, let us hear him first!" And while they were thus disputing among themselves whether to hear him or kill him, Wesley broke out in loud supplication, which prayer was suddenly answered by Him who holdeth the hearts of all men in His hand, and the ruffian that headed the mob, and who was a professional prize-fighter, was suddenly struck with awe and tenderness, and when Wesley had reached the "Amen," this fellow turned to him and said, "Sir, I will spend my life for

you ; follow me, and not one soul here shall touch a hair of your head.” Then a stout butcher cried out that he also would stand by him, and several others at once rallied for his protection, before whom the people fell back as if by common consent, and, led on through their open ranks by these heaven-sent champions, Wesley passed safely through the midst of the mob, and escaped to his lodgings unharmed.

As in Sheffield, so in Wednesbury and elsewhere, the clergy and the magistrates favoured the mob : the former instigated it, and the latter refused to suppress it. The Methodists of the town had already endured intolerable wrongs. Women and children had been knocked down and dragged in the gutters of the streets ; their houses had been attacked, their windows and furniture demolished ; and so worthless was the police of that day, that the rioters were accustomed to assemble at the blowing of a horn, and virtually usurped the control of the town for nearly half a year.

It was in view of these sufferings on the part of his people, of which his younger brother had had such a rough experience, that John Wesley presented himself in the Black Country to face the fury of his enemies. God was evidently with him, proving again the truth of the declaration that He is able to make the wrath of man to praise Him, and the remainder He will restrain. Doubtless it was the swift answer to Wesley’s prayer that turned the hearts of the leaders of the mob, so that from desiring to kill him they were ready to die in defending him ; for on no other theory can this sudden change of feeling and purpose be explained.

From Wednesbury Wesley went to Nottingham, where his brother Charles was preaching. “He looked,” says the latter, “like a soldier of Christ : his clothes were torn to tatters.” These were, indeed, stormy days for Methodism. But the storm had not yet reached its height.

On the 15th of November, 1774, King George sent a message to the House of Parliament, saying that he had received intelligence that the oldest son of the Pretender, that is to say, the heir of the papist King James II., had arrived in France, and that preparations were there being made to invade England, and place this scion of the house of Stuart upon the throne. Great excitement followed

War was declared against France, the coast was watched with the utmost care, all the military forces were ordered to the posts of duty, the *Habeas Corpus* Act was suspended, and a proclamation was issued for a general fast.

All papists and reputed papists were forbidden to remain within ten miles of the cities of Westminster and London. Loyal addresses were presented to the King by the Universities of Oxford and Cambridge, by the merchants of London, by the convocation of the province of Canterbury, by the Quakers, by the Protestant dissenters, and by many others; but there is no account of any loyal address being presented by the Methodists, they being so small a body as yet, such an action would have seemed ridiculous. For this or some other equally foolish reason, rumours began to prevail that the Methodist preachers were plotting to aid the house of Stuart, and all sorts of calumnies against them flew over the land. It was reported that Wesley had held an interview with the Pretender in France; that he had been taken up for high treason; that he was safe in prison, awaiting execution. It was also declared that he was a Jesuit, and kept a sort of head-quarters for Romish priests in his house at London. Spain, being a papist country, was expected to aid the fortunes of the house of Stuart, and Wesley was said to have received large remittances of money from thence, in order to raise a body of twenty thousand men to aid the expected Spanish invasion. Other slanders followed, which accused him of being an Anabaptist, a Quaker, a malefactor who had been prosecuted for selling gin; and finally, it was alleged that the genuine John Wesley had hanged himself, and was dead and buried, and the "John Wesley" who was figuring in politics was merely a pretender: all of which reports found ready believers among people who desired a reason for hating the Methodists.

What was the surprise and indignation of Mr. Wesley to find these outrages described in the London newspapers as perpetrated by the Methodists, who, "upon some pretended insults from the Church party, had risen in insurrection against the Government"! He at once hastened from London to sustain the persecuted Societies in the riotous districts, for it was his rule "always to face the mob." At

Dudley, one of the mining towns, he learned that the lay preacher of the station had been greatly abused at the instigation of the parish minister, and would probably have been murdered, had not an honest Quaker loaned him his broad-brimmed hat and plain coat, in which disguise he managed to escape. One of the magistrates refused to hear a Methodist who came to take oath that his life was in danger; another delivered a member of the Society up to the mob, and, waving his hand over his head, shouted, “Hurrah, boys! well done! stand up for the Church!”

On this memorable tour Wesley cheered and steadied the Societies, and, taking his stand in the public squares of those towns where there had been the greatest violence, he boldly preached the truth to them. These services, performed in the immediate danger of his life, he describes in his Journal as “taming the mobs.” “The rocks,” he says, “were melted on every side, and the very ringleaders declared that they would make no more disturbance.”

At Epworth, where the old persecuting spirit still raged, he found his preacher, Thomas Westall, who had been driven away from Nottingham by the mob and the mayor. As he passed through the town of Birstal, in Yorkshire, he came upon the mob as they were tearing down the house of John Nelson, the sturdy Methodist preacher, of whom we shall see more in due time. The cowardly rabble fled on the approach of Wesley and his companions, who advanced upon them with no other weapons than some Methodist hymns, which they were singing right lustily.

These are but a few of the outrages endured by the Methodists during this British craze over the expected invasion of the papist Pretender; but to their everlasting honour be it spoken, none of these things moved them, and, what is more a matter of wonder, this senseless persecution, instigated by the clergy, and winked at by the magistrates, did not drive them from their loyalty either to the Church or the King. If they had only been willing to become dissenters, they would have been at peace; but they were continually urged by the Wesleys to continue faithful to the Establishment; and there was no redress for them, in view of their irregularities, except under the common law, which

in those days, as well as in these, was a luxury that poor people could ill afford, and which then, as now, was apt to cost a great deal more than it was worth.

Among the beauties of the British Government in those times was the "press-gang," by which His Majesty's army and navy were forcibly recruited in times of war—and there used to be war almost all the time. It was lawful to seize, for service in the navy, any able-bodied seaman between the ages of eighteen and forty-five; and for this purpose small detachments of trusty tars, with an officer at their head, were accustomed to prowl around the haunts of the sailors on shore, and carry off their prisoners to the man-of-war lying at anchor in the river or bay. A modified form of this indignity was sometimes practised to capture recruits for the army. A vagrant might be impressed for a soldier, if he could not give a satisfactory account of himself, and under this pretext it became a favourite means of persecuting the Methodist lay preachers to arrest them as strolling vagabonds, having no visible means of support, and to thrust them into the vilest dungeon to be found, to await the arrival of some regiment, into which they were impressed to serve in the rank and file. An officer, with his *posse*, would even break through an out-door congregation, seize the preacher, drag him off to prison, and hold him as a pressed man, from which durance vile he could only escape by the payment of a fine or ransom of forty pounds.

One of Wesley's preachers, named Drew, was, however, of a less placid temper than his leader. While travelling his circuit in Devonshire, he was interrupted in one of his open-air sermons in the hamlet of Saddiport by the appearance of a rabble headed by a magistrate named Stevens, who ordered the parish clerk to pull the preacher down from the chair which served him for a pulpit. The clerk, more sensible than the magistrate, was unwilling to obey the order, and said, "Let him alone, sir; let him preach it out." But Stevens's churchly blood was up, and, finding the clerk would not serve him, he executed the order himself, and dragged the preacher to the ground.

The poor man was now at the mercy of the mob, who began to push him toward the mouth of an old quarry pit

near by, the magistrate all the while urging them on ; and when they came to the pit, Drew, finding that he must inevitably be flung into it, seized the magistrate by the skirt of his coat just as he was pushed over the edge, and both were precipitated into the depths below, from which they scrambled out scratched and bruised, the magistrate having received his full share of the punishment.

An attempt was even made by the Cornwall parson, Dr. Borlase, already mentioned, to impress the leader of all the Methodists, and make him fight the battles of King George. One day, as Wesley was preaching at Gwennap, two men, raging like maniacs, rode into the midst of the congregation, and began to lay hold upon the people. In the midst of the disturbance Wesley and his friends commenced singing, when Dr. Borlase lost his patience, and bawled to his attendants, “Seize him ! seize him ! I say, seize the preacher for His Majesty’s service.” The attendants not moving, he cursed them with the greatest bitterness, leaped off his horse, caught hold of Wesley’s cassock, crying, “I take you to serve His Majesty.” Wesley made no resistance, but walked with him for three-quarters of a mile, by which time the courage of the valorous parson failed him, and he was glad to let the arch-Methodist go.

John Nelson, the Birstal preacher, whose name has already been mentioned, was one of the notable men who, in the early days of the Methodist movement, were called out by Mr. Wesley as helpers ; or who, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, offered themselves to him of their own accord to serve as “sons in the Gospel.” He was a stone-mason of Birstal, in Yorkshire, the son of a godly father, well instructed in the Scriptures, and master of his trade, the husband of a good wife, and blessed with outward comforts ; nevertheless, he says he lived a life of intolerable misery on account of his intense convictions of sin. For years he was tormented with awful dreams by night and gloomy forebodings by day, till, in the bitterness of his spirit, he declared that he would rather be strangled than live thirty more such years as the thirty he had just passed. He sought everywhere for religious instruction, but neither the Episcopalians, the Presbyterians, Independents, Roman Catholics, nor Quakers, could point him the way to pardon and peace.

“I had now,” he says, “tried all but the Jews, and I thought it was to no purpose to go to them.” He now began to wander about from place to place, working a short time at his trade, and putting himself in the way of all the help he could hear of for his wretched state of mind, but nowhere could he find rest for his miserable soul. When Mr. Whitefield commenced his preaching at Moorfields, he went to hear him. “He was to me,” says Nelson, “as a man that could play well on an instrument, for his preaching was pleasant to me; and I loved the man, so that if any one had offered to disturb him I was ready to fight for him. I got some hope of mercy, so that I was encouraged to pray on and spend my leisure hours in reading the Scriptures.”

The first time that John Wesley preached at Moorfields, Nelson was present, and in his account of his conversion he says, “Oh, that was a blessed morning to my soul! As soon as he had got upon the stand he stroked back his hair, and turned his face toward where I stood, and I thought he fixed his eyes upon me. His countenance struck such an awful dread upon me before I heard him speak, that it made my heart beat like the pendulum of a clock, and when he did speak, I thought his whole discourse was aimed at me.”*

Nelson might well think this; for it was one of Wesley’s peculiar characteristics to wind up his discourses, and drive home the doctrine thereof, with the most pointed and personal exhortations. At such times he spoke as if he were addressing himself to an individual, so that every one whose condition he might describe felt as if he were singled out from all the rest, and the preacher’s words, like the eyes of a portrait, seemed to look at every beholder.

“Who art thou,” he cried, “that now feelest both thine inward and outward ungodliness? Thou art the man! I want *thee* for my Lord; I challenge *thee* for a child of God by faith; the Lord hath need of *thee*. Thou who feelest that thou art just fit for hell, art just fit to advance His glory—the glory of His free grace.

“Look unto Jesus! There is the Lamb of God who taketh away thy sins! Plead thou no works, no righteous-

* Nelson’s Journal.

ness of thine own ; that were in very deed to deny the Lord that bought thee. No. Plead thou singly the blood of the covenant, the ransom paid for thy proud, stubborn, sinful soul.” No wonder John Nelson imagined that the preacher had him in his eye.

Soon after this he found rest in Christ, and so completely did he resign himself to the Lord, that he straightway began to declare it to be his “great business in this world to get well out of it.” Upon this some of his London friends became exceeding angry at the preacher who had “turned John Nelson’s head ;” some of them even vowed that they would be glad to knock Wesley’s brains out, for he would be the ruin of many families if he were allowed to live and go on converting people after this fashion.

Nelson was now employed on some work for the Government, and the foreman wished him to work on Sunday, on the plea that the “King’s business required haste,” and that it was customary to work on Sunday for His Majesty when they were pressed for time ; but Nelson stoutly declared that he would not work on Sunday for any man in England, unless to put out a fire or some such work of necessity or mercy.

“Your religion has made you a rebel against the King,” said the foreman.

“No,” said Nelson ; “it has made me a better subject than ever I was. The greatest enemies the King has are the Sabbath-breakers, the swearers, the drunkards, and such-like, for these pull down judgments upon both King and country.” Thus the sturdy Methodist won the day, and lost nothing, for his reputation for integrity was all the more firmly established, and his employer had now a higher regard for him than ever.

The straightforwardness of the man appears in the following incident, related at the time, in a letter to Mr. Wesley, in which he gives an account of his arrest at Nottingham, and of his being brought before the alderman for examination :—

“I wonder you cannot stay at home,” said his honour. “You see the mob won’t suffer you to preach in this town.”

“I did not know this town was governed by the mob ; most towns are governed by the magistrates,” he replied.

“What ! do you expect us to take your part, when you take the people from their work ?” said the alderman.

“Sir, you are wrongly informed,” said Nelson ; “we preach at five in the morning and at seven at night, and these are the hours when most people are in their beds in the morning, and at night either at the play or at the ale-house.”

“I believe you are the cause of all the evil that has fallen upon the nation,” said the alderman.

“What reason have you to believe so ? Can you prove that one Methodist in England did assist the rebels with either men, money, or arms ?”

“No,” was the reply ; “but it has been observed that there has always been such a people before any great evil fell on the land.”

“It hath been as you say,” answered John ; “but that people was not the cause of the evil, any more than we are at this time. But these mobbers, and swearers, and drunkards, and whoremongers, and extortioners, and lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God—these are the cause why God afflicteth both man and beast, not we. We are sent to persuade them to break off their sins by repentance, that the heavy judgments of God may not consume such a people. And if there be not a general reformation, God will be avenged of such a nation as this.”

The remainder of his remarks he does not record. But he says, “I opened my mouth, and I did not cease to set life and death before him ;” at which the poor magistrate began to shake, and the constable, seeing the pass to which things were likely to come, began to be uneasy, and inquired what he should do with him.

“I think you must take him to your house,” said the alderman, who was now intent on saving Nelson from further violence. But when the constable declined the honour, the justice said, “You may go where you came from ;” whereupon he ordered the constable to take the preacher to the house from which he had taken him, and to see that the mob did him no harm ; which was a great mortification to the constable and a great delight to the preacher.

This stalwart Methodist was the comrade of Wesley in one of his preaching tours through the county of Cornwall, of which he gives the following lively account :—

"All this time Mr. Wesley and I lay on the floor; he had my great-coat for his pillow, and I had Burkitt's 'Notes on the New Testament' for mine. After being here nearly three weeks, one morning, about three o'clock, Mr. Wesley turned over, and finding me awake, clapped me on the side, saying, 'Brother Nelson, let us be of good cheer; I have one whole side yet, for the skin is off but one side.' We usually preached on the commons, going from one common to another, and it was but seldom any one asked us to eat or drink. One day we had been at St. Hilary Downs, where Mr. Wesley preached from Ezekiel's vision of dry bones, and there was a shaking among the people while he preached. As we returned, Mr. Wesley stopped his horse to pick the blackberries, saying, 'Brother Nelson, we ought to be thankful that there are plenty of blackberries; for this is the best country I ever saw for getting a stomach, but the worst that ever I saw for getting food.'"

On reaching home at Birstal, after this notable preaching tour, he was warned of a plot against him. The ale-house keepers had complained of a loss of their customers in consequence of his preaching, and the parish clergyman was jealous of his eloquence; these two, therefore, joined together to have Nelson arrested as a vagrant, on which charge, if sustained, he might be forced into the king's service. His examination before the magistrate at Halifax, who was himself the vicar of the parish, was the very height of absurdity considered as a process of law; and, refusing to hear any evidence in his defence, this clerical court ordered him to a vile and filthy dungeon at Bradford, in which miserable place, with no food except such as was brought him in charity, and with no other bed than a heap of straw, the brave fellow was held a prisoner in the king's name for no other offence than that of being too good a preacher to suit the cupidity of the publican and the jealousy of the parson.

Nelson's wife came to see him in this wretched den, and through a hole in the door she exhorted him thus :—

"Fear not; the cause is God's for which you are here,

and He will plead it Himself. Be not concerned about me and the children, for He that feeds the young ravens will take care of us."

"I cannot fear either man or the devil," answered the brave fellow, "so long as I find the love of God as I now do."

The next day he was sent to Leeds, where multitudes flocked to see him, and hundreds of people stood in the streets and looked at him through the iron gate of his prison, where at night a hundred persons met him and joined him in the worship of God. From Leeds he was marched off to York, a violent anti-Methodist region, and as he was brought into the town under a guard of soldiers the streets and the windows were filled with people, who shouted after him as if he had been a pirate. But he says, in his account of the occasion, "The Lord made my brow like brass, so that I could look upon them as grasshoppers, and pass through the street as if there had been none in it but God and me."

While waiting at York for a chance of active soldiering, Nelson was put on his course of training for that new profession; but when he was ordered to parade, the corporal who was commanded to gird him with his military trappings trembled as if he had the palsy. Nelson said he would wear these things as a cross, but would not fight, as it was not agreeable to his conscience, and he would not harm his conscience for any man on earth. Whenever he had an opportunity he was sure to exercise his gifts as a preacher, and so great became the terror of his word among the officers and soldiers, that they feared to continue the abusive treatment which he had at first received, and before long he was allowed the same privileges as any other soldier, which he straightway began to use by preaching in the streets and fields. He was at last released by the influence of Lady Huntingdon, after having been marched about the country with his regiment for about three months, during which time he had endured hardness as a good soldier of the Lord Jesus Christ, though as a soldier of His Majesty King George he was a most conspicuous failure.

CHAPTER VIII.

"FIGHTINGS WITHOUT AND FEARS WITHIN."

IT was in the midst of these stormy times, perhaps because of them, that Wesley convened his first Conference at the Old Foundry, in London, on the 25th of June, 1744. It was simply a meeting of the two Wesleys with four of their friends from among the English clergy, and four lay preachers, who came together at Mr. Wesley's invitation, to give him their advice "respecting the best method of carrying on the work." The following is the Conference roll:—

Rev. JOHN WESLEY, A.M.; Rev. CHARLES WESLEY; Rev. JOHN HODGES, Rector of Wenvo; Rev. HENRY PIERS, Vicar of Bexley; Rev. SAMUEL TAYLOR, Vicar of Quinton; Rev. JOHN MERITON, a clergyman from the Isle of Man; THOMAS MAXFIELD, lay preacher; THOMAS RICHARDS, lay preacher; JOHN BENNET, lay preacher; JOHN DOWNES, lay preacher.

Of the four clerical members of this small but memorable council who ventured to accept Mr. Wesley's invitation, Hodges was a Welsh minister who had often accompanied the Wesleys in their preaching tour through that principality. Piers was a convert and fellow-labourer of Charles Wesley. Taylor, the Vicar of Quinton, in Gloucestershire, was himself a notable evangelist, with some of the old English martyr blood in him, who, like Wesley, was accustomed to go out into the highways and hedges in the name of the Lord, and who also bore his share of persecution. Meriton had been educated in one of the Universities, and was now a clergyman in the Isle of Man. The last years of his life seem to have been chiefly spent in accompanying the Wesleys on

their preaching excursions, and in assisting them in the chapels they had built. Of the four lay members of this first Conference, three afterwards left Mr. Wesley, and became ministers of other churches ; John Downes being the only one who lived and died a Methodist.

The day before the Conference commenced was a memorable one. Besides the ordinary preaching service, a love-feast was held at the Old Foundry, and the sacrament of the Lord's Supper was administered to the whole of the London Society, now numbering between two and three thousand members ; at which sacramental service five clergymen assisted. On the day following, the Conference was opened with prayer, a sermon by Charles Wesley, and the baptism of an adult, who then and there found peace with God.

No mere dogmatic questions were raised, but the Conference confined its attention to these three points, namely : 1. What to teach. 2. How to teach. 3. How to regulate doctrine, discipline, and practice. " It is desired," said these good men, " that everything be considered as in the immediate presence of God ; that we may meet with a single eye, and as little children who have everything to learn ; that every point may be examined from the foundation ; that every person may speak freely what is in his heart, and that every question proposed may be freely debated, and ' bolted to the bran.' "

The form of question, which has ever since been retained in the Minutes of the British Conference, because of its manifest simplicity and directness, was here first used. It was also agreed that lay assistants, of which there were now about forty, were allowable only in cases of necessity. They were to expound every morning and evening ; to meet the united bands, or private societies within Societies, and the penitents once a week ; to visit the classes once a quarter ; to hear and decide all controversies ; to put the disorderly back on trial, and to receive on trial for the bands of Society ; to see that the stewards, the leaders, schoolmasters, and housekeepers, faithfully discharged their several offices ; and to meet the leaders and stewards weekly, and to examine their accounts. They were to be serious ; to

converse sparingly and cautiously with women, taking no step toward marriage without first acquainting Mr. Wesley or his brother clergymen, and to do nothing “as a gentleman,” for they had “no more to do with this character than with that of a dancing-master.”

They were to be ashamed of nothing but sin. They were to take no money of any one, and were to contract no debts without Wesley’s knowledge ; they were not to mend the rules, but to keep them ; they were to employ their time as Wesley directed, and to keep journals, as well for Wesley’s satisfaction as for their own profit. After preaching, they were recommended to take lemonade, candied orange peel, or a little soft warm ale ; and to avoid late suppers and eggs and wine, as downright poison.

Some of these directions are sufficiently familiar to those who have had the good fortune to be present at a conference during the reception of ministers into the travelling connection. The “warm ale” and “orange peel” have indeed disappeared, but the weightier matters of advice in doctrine and practice still stand in the discipline which governs, or is supposed to govern, nearly twenty-five thousand Methodist clergy.

The number of friends and helpers among the English clergy was always very small, nor did it increase in the ratio of the increase of the popular success of the Methodist movement. This was a source of great anxiety to Mr. Wesley, who had not yet been delivered from the bondage of ecclesiastical traditions, and who, by the peculiarity of his position, was sometimes led to look narrowly at the bars of his churchly prison to see if some of them were not loose in their sockets, and so might be removed to give him egress when he would go out, and ingress when he desired to be found within ; for on no account would he make use of the door of dissent, which would have opened widely enough to let him out, but which would be barred and bolted against his return. The state of his mind at this time is indicated in one of his letters, in which he says, “We will obey all the laws of that Church (such as we allow the rubrics to be, but not the customs of the ecclesiastical courts), so far as we can with a safe conscience ; and with the same restriction

we will obey the bishops, as executors of those laws ; but their bare will, distinct from those laws, we do not profess to obey at all. Field-preaching is contrary to no law which we profess to obey ; nor are we clear that the allowing lay preachers is contrary to any such law. But if it is, this is one of the exempt cases, one wherein we cannot obey with a safe conscience."

The question, " Shall we leave the Established Church ? " continually occurs in the minutes of his Annual Conferences, as if to indicate that it was constantly pressed upon his attention as a means of relieving himself and his friends from the difficulties of their situation. But the oft-repeated answer is, *No, No, NO!* given with more or less of argument and explanation, and sometimes with a leaning toward a larger liberty. Thus at the third day's session of the Conference of 1745 the question was asked, " Is Episcopalian, Presbyterian, or Independent Church government most agreeable to reason ? "

The answer was, " A preacher preaches and forms an independent congregation ; he then forms another and another in the immediate vicinity of the first ; this obliges him to appoint deacons, who look on the first pastor as their common father ; and as these congregations increase, and as their deacons grow in years and grace, they need other subordinate deacons, or helpers, in respect of whom they are called presbyters, or elders, as their father in the Lord may be called the bishop, or overseer of them all."

The next year the famous work of Lord King, afterward Lord High Chancellor of England, fell into his hands, entitled, " An Inquiry into the Constitution, Discipline, Unity, and Worship of the Primitive Church, that flourished Three Hundred Years after Christ ; Faithfully Collected out of the extant Writings of those Ages."

King was a dissenter, and the chief object of his learned work was to prepare the way for that comprehension of the dissenters within the pale of the Established Church which the Revolution of 1688 was supposed likely to accomplish. The effect upon Wesley's mind of this learned attack on the ecclesiastical pretensions of the clergy of the Church of Rome and of England was to demolish the fiction of an unbroken

succession of bishops as a third order of the ministry ordained by Christ and descended from the apostles. After reading it he says, “In spite of the vehement prejudice of my education, I was ready to believe that this was a fair and impartial draught; but if so, it would follow that bishops and presbyters are (essentially) of one order, and that originally every Christian congregation was a church independent of all others.”

The original Methodists were not fastidious in their architectural tastes. A large barn was, in their judgment, preferable to a small parlour or chapel; and rather than measure their labours by the capacity of a fine church, they preferred to address the multitude in the market-place or in the fields.

On the 7th of May, 1747, Mr. Wesley paid his first visit to Manchester, where a few young men had formed themselves into a society, rented a room, and written a letter desiring to be admitted to the Methodist fraternity. This preaching room was in the garret of a three-story house which overhung the river, and whose groundfloor was a joiner's shop. The middle story was occupied as a residence, and a part of the garret was also the home of a poor woman who plied her spinning-wheel in one corner while her husband worked his loom in another. A third corner was occupied as a bunker for coals, and in the fourth the young men held their services.

The Nottingham Society for many years held its meetings in the residence of one of its members, named Matthew Bagshaw, which place was ingeniously fitted up to serve this double purpose. The largest room on the first floor being too small for the congregation, the bedroom overhead was made to connect with it by means of a large trap-door in the ceiling, and the preacher, mounted on a chair which was perched upon a table, could command his hearers above as well as below. But this was elegant compared with some of the regular churches in Wales, one of which Mr. Wesley mentions as not having a glass window belonging to it, but only boards with holes bored here and there, through which the dim light glimmered; while some of the Irish sanctuaries were even more simple, being wholly built of mud and straw,

with the exception of a few rough beams required to support the thatch.

In the summer of 1746, Thomas Williams, one of Wesley's itinerant preachers, made his appearance in the city of Dublin, where, by his pleasing manners and good address, as well as by his sound doctrine and zeal for God, he gathered a little society, and then sent for his chief to come and visit it. Wesley complied at his earliest convenience, and landed in Dublin on Sunday morning, August 9th, of the same year.

The welcome he received from all sorts and conditions of men, including even His Grace the Archbishop, led Mr. Wesley to write :—

“ For natural sweetness of temper, for courtesy and hospitality, I have never seen any people like the Irish. Indeed, all I conversed with were only English transplanted into another soil, and they are much mended by the removal, having left all their roughness and surliness behind them.

“ At least ninety-nine in a hundred of the native Irish remain in the religion of their forefathers. The Protestants, whether in Dublin or elsewhere, are almost all transplanted from England. Nor is it any wonder that those who are born Papists generally live and die such, when the Protestants can find no better ways to convert them than penal laws and Acts of Parliament.”

On Wesley's return to England, his brother Charles, with Charles Perronet, one of Wesley's clerical helpers, took charge of the Dublin Society, for whose use their chief had secured a chapel in Marlborough Street ; but in an evil day the uncomfortable John Cennick, who had now become as weary of Whitefield as he formerly was of Wesley, and had gone over to the Moravians, made his appearance in the Irish capital, and by his wild attacks on the doctrine of the Papists brought all the Methodists into disrepute. “ The courtesy and natural sweetness ” of the Irish temper had been overborne by their zeal for the Papist religion, and Charles Wesley found that the chapel had been destroyed by the mob, whose shillalabs had not spared the heads of the congregation, and for a time there was no one to be found in Dublin who dared to sell or rent the Methodists a place of worship.

But the Irish temper is like Irish weather, stormy and sunny within the same hour. For awhile Charles Wesley preached at the risk of his life on Oxmantown Green; but the wrath of the mob quickly cooled down, and in a few weeks he was able to buy a house and fit it up for a preaching place, whose location, with almost Hibernian aptness, he describes in a letter to his brother as "a house near Dolphin's barn."

The results of this were vastly important. Forty-two times Wesley crossed the Irish Channel, and spent, in his different visits, at least half a dozen years of his laborious life in the Emerald Isle. Ireland yielded him some of the most eminent of his coadjutors: Thomas Walsh, Adam Clarke, Henry Moore, and others; and Irish men and women were ordained by Providence to carry Methodism into almost every quarter of the globe.

On the return of the elder Wesley to Ireland in the spring of 1748 he found a Society in Dublin of nearly four hundred members. A wide circuit had been organized, including Athlone, Tullamore, Birr, Aghrim, Ballymote, Castlebar, Sligo, and Cooleylough, the last-named being the cathedral town, only there was no cathedral there, the quarterly meetings being held under the hospitable roof of Mr. Handy, an Irish Methodist gentleman of the olden time, while preaching might be done in any convenient place under the shelter of the sky.

For four or five years the Dublin Methodists worshipped "in the house near Dolphin's barn," till an elegant chapel was erected for them in Whitefriar Street, in the year 1752.

The city of Cork, especially at that day, was not a very safe place for a Methodist preacher; but when John Wesley was planned, the element of fear was left out of his composition, and therefore he was not afraid to invade that wild Irish city. As he rode through the town he found that his fame had preceded him, for the people crowded to the doors and windows of their houses to catch a glimpse of the arch-Methodist as he passed. Their evident temper was such that he judged it best not to call such a crowd together until he had further studied the situation; so he rode straight

through the city, and preached first at the Protestant town of Bandon, and afterward at Blarney, where the ridiculous report was spread abroad that the Methodists believed that religion consisted in wearing long whiskers! What the Methodist women did to be saved they did not undertake to explain.

A strolling ballad-singer named Butler and his gang amused themselves daily and nightly by maltreating the Methodists, breaking their windows, and spoiling their goods, the Mayor of the city himself being sometimes a silent spectator, and refusing to interfere to preserve the peace. Every day for a fortnight the mob gathered in front of the house of David Sullivan and threatened to pull it down, and he at length applied to the Mayor for protection.

"It is your own fault for entertaining those preachers," answered the Mayor; whereupon the mob set up a loud huzza, and threw stones faster than ever.

"This is fine usage under a Protestant government," said Sullivan. "If I had a priest saying mass in my house, he would not be touched."

The Mayor replied, "The priests are tolerated, but you are not;" and the crowd, thus encouraged, continued throwing stones till midnight.

On May 31, 1749, the day that Wesley passed through Cork, Butler and his friends assembled at the chapel, and beat and bruised and cut the congregation most fearfully. The rioters burst open the chapel doors; tore up the pews, the benches, and the floor, and burned them in the open street. Having demolished the chapel, Butler and his gang of ruffians went from street to street, and from house to house, abusing, threatening, and maltreating the Methodists at their pleasure, some of the women narrowly escaping with their lives. For two months these horrible outrages were continued; and at the end of that period Wesley writes: "It was not for those who had any regard either to their persons or goods to oppose Mr. Butler after this. So the poor people patiently suffered whatever he and his mob were pleased to inflict upon them."

The next year Wesley again risked life and limb among these semi-savages of Cork, who burned him in effigy, and

broke the windows, as well as the heads, of quite a number of his congregation. On this occasion one of the leaders of the mob was a drunken clergyman, who, when Wesley was preaching at Bandon, got up beside him, flourished his shillalah, and gave the signal for an attack; but his reverence was too drunk to be an effective leader, and three women of the congregation pulled him down and carried him off, leaving the preacher to go on with his discourse in peace.

In spite of the dangers which he and his friends encountered among them, Wesley still loved the Irish people, and visited their Societies almost every year. In his Journal he relates some of his most striking experiences among them. For instance:—

At Aymo, where he wished to sleep, the woman who kept the inn refused him admittance, and, moreover, let loose four dogs to worry him.

At Portarlington he had the unthankful task of reconciling the differences of two termagant women, who talked for three hours, and grew warmer and warmer, till they were almost distracted. Wesley says: "I perceived there was no remedy but prayer; so a few of us wrestled with God for above two hours." The result was, after three hours of scolding and two hours of praying, anger gave place to love, and the quarrelsome ladies fell upon each other's neck and wept.

At Tullamore many of his congregation were drunk; but the bulk paid great attention. He rebuked the Society for their lukewarmness and covetousness, and had the pleasure of seeing them evince signs of penitence. At Tyrrell's Pass he found a great part of the Society "walking in the light, and praising God all the day long." At Cooleylough he preached to backsliders. In the midst of the service at Athlone a man passed by on a fine prancing horse, which drew off a large part of the congregation. Wesley paused, and then, raising his voice, said, "If there are any more of you who think it is of more concern to see a dancing horse than to hear the Gospel of Christ, pray go after them." The renegades heard the rebuke, and the majority at once returned.

In 1752 Wesley paid another visit to the Green Isle,

accompanied by Thomas Walsh, who was possessed of the rare accomplishment of being able to preach in the Irish language. At this time steps were taken to erect a Methodist house in Cork, and four years later Wesley, after preaching in it, says it was in every way the equal of the Dublin house, and built for two hundred pounds less money.

The first Irish Conference was held at Limerick, on the 14th and 15th of August, 1752, at which there were ten preachers in attendance, and where six others were admitted; among whom was Philip Guier, one of a company of German refugees called Palatines, which had settled in the neighbourhood of Ballingran about forty years before. He was the master of the German school at Ballingran; and it was in his school that Philip Embury (subsequently the founder of Methodism in the United States, now a young man thirty-two years of age) had been taught to read and write. By means of Guier, also, the devoted Thomas Walsh, of the same age as Embury, had been enlightened and prepared to receive the truth as it is in Jesus. Philip Guier was made the leader of the infant Society at Limerick, and now, in 1752, was appointed to act as a local preacher among the Palatines. He still kept his school, but devoted his spare hours to preaching. The people loved the man, and sent him flour, oatmeal, bacon, and potatoes, so that Philip, if not rich, was not in want.

The Irish itinerants were to be allowed £8 at least, and if possible £10 a year, and £10 a year were to be allowed for the support of each preacher's wife. The preachers were to preach frequently and strongly on fasting; and were to practise it every Friday, health permitting. Next to luxury they were to avoid idleness, and to spend one hour every day in private prayer.

It is a remarkable fact that after the lapse of a hundred years the name of Philip Guier is as fresh in Ballingran as ever; and still the Papists, as well as Protestants, are accustomed to salute the Methodist minister as he jogs along on his circuit horse, and say, "There goes Philip Guier, who drove the devil out of Ballingran!"

Perhaps no single utterance of John Wesley so well serves

to set forth his idea of his power over the itinerant preachers as the following extract from one of his letters to Edward Perronet, in 1750. He was evidently in a disturbed frame of mind over the action of the Society at Cork, to which he refers: for one of the things he especially hated was the idea of separation from the Established Church. Edward Perronet had a brother Charles. The italics are Wesley's own.

“I have abundance of complaints to make, as well as to hear. I have scarce any one on whom I can depend when I am a hundred miles off. 'Tis well if I do not run away soon, and leave them to cut and shuffle for themselves. Here [in Ireland] is a glorious people; but O! where are the shepherds? The Society at Cork have fairly sent me word that they will take care of themselves, and erect themselves into a dissenting congregation. I am weary of these sons of Zeruah: they are too hard for me. Charles and you *behave* as I want you to do; but you cannot, or will not, preach *where* I desire. Others can and will preach *where* I desire, but they do not *behave* as I want them to do. I have a fine time between the one and the other. I think both Charles and you have, in the general, a right sense of what it is to serve as sons in the gospel; and if all our helpers had had the same, the work of God would have prospered better, both in England and Ireland. I have not one preacher with me, and not six in England, whose wills are broken to serve me thus.”

“Whose wills are broken to serve me.” Surely no ecclesiastical superior ever expressed himself with more clearness and force. Though not claiming now to be a bishop, John Wesley was an apt scholar in the use of the crosier, and it was not long before he also learned how to handle the ecclesiastical sword.

An account of Mr. Wesley's labours and productions as editor, author, and publisher will be given elsewhere, but it is well to notice here his defence of himself against the charge that he was carrying on his great work with a view to making money. This defence was published in 1743, in reply to a report which had been circulated, that he enjoyed an income from the Foundry Society alone of thirteen hundred pounds a year over and above what he received

from the Societies at Bristol, Kingswood, Newcastle, and other places. He declares that the money given by the Methodists never comes into his hands at all, but is received and expended by the stewards in the relief of the poor, the purchase, erection, and repair of chapels; and that, so far from there being any overplus left for himself, he had borrowed and contributed on his own account some six hundred and fifty pounds for the preaching houses in London, Bristol, and Newcastle. Then, addressing himself to his clerical brethren, he asks:—

“For what price will you preach eighteen or nineteen times every week; and this throughout the year? What shall I give you to travel seven or eight hundred miles, in all weathers, every two or three months? For what salary will you abstain from all other diversions than the doing good and the praising God? I am mistaken if you would not prefer strangling to such a life, even with thousands of gold and silver. As to gold and silver, I count it dung and dross; I trample it under my feet; I esteem it just as the mire of the streets. I desire it not; I seek it not; I only fear lest any of it should cleave to me, and I should not be able to shake it off before my spirit returns to God. I will take care (God being my helper) that none of the accursed thing shall be found in my tents when the Lord calleth me hence. Hear ye this, all you who have discovered the treasures which I am to leave behind me; if I leave behind me ten pounds—above my debts and my books, or what may happen to be due on account of them—you and all mankind bear witness against me, that I lived and died a thief and a robber.”

Many years afterward Wesley “became rich unawares,” by the immense circulation of his books and tracts among the ever-increasing multitudes of his followers and friends; but he treated himself as a servant of his own establishment, and only allowed himself “thirty pounds a year and an occasional suit of clothes” out of the income of his London publishing house; the rest, above his travelling expenses, he gave away—some to the support of his brother Charles, in addition to his proper share of the income from the sale of the hymnbooks; some to relieve the necessities of his widowed

or unhappily married sisters ; some to help his lay preachers, who without his aid could have hardly kept soul and body together ; a large amount to build the London school and preaching-houses ; and the rest he poured out in a ceaseless stream of alms and benefactions to the poor and unfortunate whom he met day by day.

In 1747 Mr. Wesley established a kind of bank at the Foundry, which he called a "Lending Society." This institution commenced business on a capital of fifty pounds, which Mr. Wesley had begged among his friends in London, and lodged in the hands of the stewards, who held a meeting every Tuesday morning for the purpose of loaning to approved persons small amounts not to exceed twenty shillings, on condition that the loan should be repaid within three months. This charitable loan fund soon became popular : the capital was increased to one hundred and twenty pounds, and the maximum loan to five pounds ; and by its means hundreds of honest poor people were aided in times of special distress, and some who were on the verge of ruin were by this small assistance saved from bankruptcy, and placed again on the road to fortune.

In the year 1746 Mr. Wesley opened his notable Medical Dispensary in London. Having already provided a loan fund for the relief of the poor, his attention was now called to the fact that medicines were expensive, and doctors still more expensive, and having himself some considerable knowledge of the healing art, he offered his services, without money or price, as a curer of the bodies as well as of the souls of people who were too poor to be killed or cured in the regular professional way.

"For six or seven and twenty years," says he, "I had made anatomy and physic the diversion of my leisure hours, though I never properly studied them, unless for a few months, when I was going to America." He now took up the study again, and having hired him an apothecary to take charge of his store of drugs, and an experienced surgeon to attend to the mechanical part of the business, he gave notice thereof to the Society at the Foundry, and in a short time he had a medical "practice" of over a hundred patients a month.

Of course he was branded as a quack by the regular medical profession, but he defended himself by his success, declaring that during the first four months he had cured seventy-one persons of diseases which had long been thought to be incurable, and that out of all his five hundred patients not one had died on his hands.

It was during this period that Mr. Wesley passed through another stormy experience similar to that in Savannah, which is set down in his biography as "an escape from matrimony." The woman in question—we may as well dismiss this bit of gossip at once—was Grace Murray, a sailor's widow, who, after a striking conversion, had devoted herself to a religious life in connection with Mr. Wesley's Orphan House at Newcastle, where she occupied herself with teaching, visiting the sick, leading classes of women, and making occasional excursions for a similar purpose among the Societies in the country round.

The Orphan House was also a hospital for sick preachers, several of whom she nursed, and who were greatly charmed with her; especially was this true of one, John Bennett, whom she took care of through a fever of twenty-six weeks' duration. What could be more natural than that these two pious people should become exceedingly fond of one another? But Wesley was known to be opposed to the marriage of his preachers, married preachers being more expensive, besides being much less manageable, than single ones; and when that great man himself began to pay her some attentions, the widow was too good a Methodist, and too worldly-wise withal, to say anything to him about her other clerical suitor.

It is the fashion with chroniclers of this delicate affair to look at the matter in the interest of the great Methodist man, but this record shall stand in the interest of that charming and talented Methodist woman, who must have been possessed of remarkable "gifts and graces," otherwise the Rev. John Wesley, A.M., Fellow of Lincoln College, the acknowledged head of a great and growing religious body, the personal friend of Lady Huntingdon and other aristocratic persons, would never have thought to match himself with a person of such humble extraction and condition.

John Bennett was of a very respectable family in Derbyshire, and one of the ablest and best educated men in the Methodist Connection, and a marriage between him and Grace Murray would have been eminently proper, if poverty and John Wesley had not stood in the way. But two such stubborn obstacles as these were not to be easily overcome. Bennett was so devoted to the charming widow, that she declared if she were to refuse him she believed he would go mad ; but Madam Grace, being somewhat experienced in such things, was, like any other sensible widow of a matrimonial turn, intent on securing for herself the best husband she could ; and when the General Bishop—Bennett called him "Pope"—of all the Methodists began to make love to her, the situation was an exceedingly interesting one, and withal very difficult to manage. If to refuse Bennett would drive him mad, the same treatment might make the other suitor "mad" also. Already the two men had come to hard words about her, and she, being in no small doubt and anxiety, favoured the addresses of each in turn.

At length, when the matter had become public, and was likely to do no small damage among the Societies, Charles Wesley, who was also "mad" at the idea of his distinguished brother marrying a woman of such humble antecedents, took the matter in hand, arranged a meeting between the widow and John Bennett at Bristol, and would not leave town until with his own eyes he had seen this dangerously attractive woman bound hard and fast to Bennett in the holy bonds of matrimony. This marriage occurred October 3, 1749.

Mr. Wesley's condition now was greatly changed. He was no longer a poor missionary to the Indians, among whom he thought to spend his life, but the head of a large and growing religious fraternity, whose management often required all his patience and sagacity, though he never for one instant lessened his hold of the authority which his providential position gave him. It is evident that in this matter, also, he thought to hold the affections of the lady subject to his own convenience and will ; a claim which no man has a right to set up, and which every woman has a right to deny.

Grace Murray was a woman who was seeking to make

the best possible disposal of her hand and heart, and who very much desired to marry John Bennett, if she could not have John Wesley. She had Bennett's ardent love and Wesley's promise of marriage. After the loss of much valuable time, having now jeopardised her chances of a union with Bennett, she began to grow anxious at Wesley's hesitation, and urged immediate marriage. To this he objected, because he wished "(1) To satisfy John Bennett; (2) to procure his brother's consent; (3) to send an account of his reasons for marrying to all his preachers and Societies, and to desire their prayers." When, therefore, it became evident that his "brother's consent" could never be obtained, and when all the Methodist Societies were in an uproar, about the marriage of their leader with "that woman!" she did the best thing possible under the circumstances, and became Mrs. Bennett without delay.

And now to call Grace Murray "a flirt" is to blame her for not trusting a man who was willing to sacrifice her to his convenience; to say that John Bennett was "a cheat" because he married the woman that Wesley wanted, but dared not take, is hardly the cool, historic judgment which might be looked for in such an eminent authority as Tyerman; and to call this "a dishonourable marriage" is to arraign a large proportion of the matrimony of this imperfect world, and thereby discourage that means of grace, of which already there is very much too little.

The writer of this volume gives place to no man in admiration for the excellent qualities of the arch-Methodist; but it is painfully evident that courtship and marriage are among the few subjects which John Wesley did not understand, and it must ever remain one of the regrets of the lovers of Methodist history that its chiefest character makes so poor a figure as a lover and a husband. If he had not published to the world his opinions in favour of clerical celibacy, the world would have been far more likely to allow his unhappy loves and his disastrous marriage to pass into the realm of things forgotten; but now, like other good men, having in a single instance set up his own opinion against the Divine appointment, his folly as well as his wisdom has become immortal.

To the words, "It is not good for man to be alone," he ventured to add—"except for itinerant preachers." He forbade his preachers to marry without his consent—a stretch of spiritual authority which even his own celibate life could hardly excuse; when, therefore, he became the acknowledged suitor for the hand of Grace Murray, he actually jeopardized the existence of the Methodist Connection. His preachers noticed the grave inconsistency of his course, and the Methodist sisterhood were in an agony of jealous wrath at the possible elevation of one of their common selves to a seat on the Wesleyan throne. They might have welcomed "a lady" whose rank and excellence could have given her a just pre-eminence; but Wesley's singular ecclesiastical position no doubt prevented his gaining the hand of any well-born and well-bred daughter of the Establishment: he would not marry a dissenter on any terms; and among the Methodists, now that Lady Huntingdon and her set had separated from them, there were few women to be found who were personally and socially fitted to be his wife.

By his own rule he had made the question of the marriage of a preacher a fit subject to be discussed by his brethren, therefore he could not complain if his own private love affairs were the gossip of the whole Connection. No doubt he felt wounded at the loss of the woman he had intended to marry, but he had no claim to the sentimental condolence of his friends; and he proved that his affections were not dangerously damaged by rushing into matrimony some fourteen months afterward with the widow of a London merchant named Vazel, or Vazeille, a person of no education, and who, before her marriage to the merchant, had been a domestic servant.

On Feb. 2, 1751, Mr. Wesley makes this entry in his Journal:—

"For many years I remained single, because I believed I could be more useful in a single than in a married state. And I praise God, who enabled me so to do. I now as fully believe that, in my present circumstances, I might be more useful in a married state." On the same day he wrote to his brother Charles that he was "resolved to marry;" yet four days after, he held a meeting of the single men of

the London Society, and showed them on how many accounts it was good for those who had received that gift from God to remain "single for the kingdom of heaven's sake ; unless where a particular case might be an exception to the general rule."

Four days after this remarkable service, just before he was about to start on his annual preaching tour to Newcastle and its vicinity, he slipped on the ice while crossing London Bridge, and sprained his ankle quite severely. A surgeon bound up the leg ; and with great difficulty he proceeded to Seven Dials, where he preached. He attempted to preach again at the Foundry at night ; but his sprain became so painful, that he was obliged to relinquish his intention, and he at once removed to Threadneedle Street, where Mrs. Vazeille resided ; and here he spent the next seven days, "partly," he says, "in prayer, reading, and *conversation*, and partly in writing a Hebrew grammar and Lessons for Children."

The accident occurred on Sunday, February 10. On the Sunday following he was "carried to the Foundry, and preached kneeling," not being yet able to stand ; and on the next day, or the day after, cripple though he was, he succeeded in leading Mrs. Vazeille, a widow, seven years younger than himself, to the hymeneal altar. On Monday, February 18, he was still unable to set his foot to the ground. On the Tuesday evening and on the Wednesday morning he preached kneeling, and a fortnight after his marriage, being, as he says, "tolerably able to ride, though not to walk," he set out for Bristol, leaving his newly married wife behind him.

It was not long before this hasty marriage was followed by leisurely repentance. The husband possessed in a high degree almost every other qualification except such as are essential to happiness in the married state ; while the wife, of whom nobody seems to have heard any ill report till she became Mrs. Wesley, was accused of having "an angry and bitter spirit." Mr. Jackson, one of Wesley's biographers, says : "Neither in understanding nor in education was she worthy of the eminent man to whom she was united, and her temper was intolerably bad. During the lifetime of her first husband she appears to have enjoyed every indulgence ; and judging from some of his letters to her, which

have been preserved, he paid an entire deference to her will."

John Hampson, who was one of Wesley's confidential friends, and sometimes his travelling companion, calls it a "preposterous union."

It was not long before Mrs. Wesley grew jealous on account of her husband's official relations with the women who presided over his orphanages at Bristol and Newcastle, and who led his classes of women in the various Societies throughout the kingdom; some of whom had been exceedingly bad characters previous to their conversion. For about two years she had travelled with him on his preaching tours, but not being received with all the honours which she thought due to the wife of John Wesley, she retired from the travelling connection, and stayed at home in London, nursing her wrath by brooding over her imaginary wrongs. Sometimes she would make long secret journeys for the purpose of watching her husband's behaviour; and becoming at length utterly reckless, she publicly attacked his character by publishing certain of his papers and letters, which were "doctored," and others which were forged, to suit this infamous purpose. She even laid violent hands on her husband, who, as will be remembered, was physically a small, light man, and whose gentleness and patience under what he accepted as his providential chastisement is a feeble and pitiful brightening in this dark matrimonial picture.

In most respects the great leader of "the people called Methodists" was an excellent model, but in all things relative to love and marriage even his greatest admirers can find in his history little else to praise except a forgiving spirit and patience under torture. Great men are sure to have some weakness which in humbler lives might pass unnoticed, but which the very brightness of their virtues throws out into dark and prominent relief; so this want of manliness in his relations with women stands forth as the one inevitable failing which mars the life and career of John Wesley.

The Wesleyan matrimonial chapter may as well be finished here.

The wife of Charles Wesley was Miss Sarah Gwynne, daughter of a Welsh magistrate, whose house, at Garth, was

one of the hospitable halting places of the early itinerant preachers, and where, in 1743, the younger Wesley formed an acquaintance which in six years afterward resulted in marriage. Under date of April 8, 1749, Mr. Wesley made the following entry in his Journal :—

“ *Saturday, 8.* I married my brother and Sarah Gwynne. It was a solemn day, such as became the dignity of a Christian marriage.”

This union was in all respects a happy one, though there was a considerable disparity in age, Charles being forty, and his bride twenty-three. The change from her father's mansion to a small house in Bristol was great ; but she loved her husband, and was never known to regret the comforts she had left behind. Of her eight children, most of whom were born after the family removed to London, five died in infancy, three survived their parents, and by their distinguished talent in music added lustre to the name of Wesley. Mrs. Charles Wesley died on December 28, 1822, at the age of ninety-six. Her long life was an unbroken line of devoted piety in its loveliest forms, and her death was calm and beautiful.

While the theme is before us, it may be well to refer to the marriage of the other great Methodist leader, George Whitefield.

When the great preacher visited Northampton in Massachusetts, the wife of his reverend friend, Dr. Jonathan Edwards, impressed him deeply by her solid excellence and intelligent piety, and he straightway felt impressed that marriage was at once his privilege and duty. He had, no doubt, left behind him in England the lady with whom he was as nearly in love as he ever was with any, and some time afterward he sent her a letter, written on shipboard, addressed to “ My dear Miss E.,” in which he gravely plunges at once into the question of whether she thinks herself fit to be his wife and the mistress of his Orphan House in Georgia. He advises that she consult the Lord and her other friends about the matter ; says he much likes “ the manner of Isaac's marrying Rebekah ;” calls on the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob to witness that he desires to marry her uprightly ; says he thinks it his duty to avoid “ the passionate expres-

sions which carnal courtiers use ;" and then remarks, "If you think marriage will be in any way prejudicial to your better part, be so kind as to send me a denial. I would not be a snare to you for the world."

To the parents of the lady he also wrote a letter in the same religious strain, in which, among other pious things, he says: "You need not be afraid of sending me a refusal, for, I bless God, if I know anything of my own heart, I am free from that foolish passion which the world calls *love*."

It is not surprising that such wooing by a young man of twenty-five failed of its half-hearted purpose. The next year he was more successful, if success it might be called, in his addresses to a widow about ten years older than himself, whom the enthusiastic young bridegroom describes as "neither rich in fortune nor beautiful as to her person," but one "who has been a housekeeper for many years," who is "a true child of God, and one who would not attempt to hinder me in His work for the world. In that respect I am just the same as before marriage. I hope God will never suffer me to say, 'I have married a wife, and therefore I cannot come.'"

Southey asserts that Whitefield's marriage was not a happy one, and another of his biographers coolly remarks: "He did not intentionally make his wife unhappy. He always preserved great decency and decorum in his conduct toward her. Her death set his mind much at liberty."

Such particulars as these in the biographies of great men are sometimes set forth with apologies, as if their memories were too sacred to be handled with the least approach to familiarity; but it is just such touches as these that make their portraits true to life. Without something of this kind the latent hero-worship in human nature, which is only a more subtle form of idolatry, would take these men from out the realm of history, and set them up in the *arcana* of the gods, where they would as effectually rob Jehovah of His rightful glory as do the ancestral shades of China, the classic heroes of Greece, or the patron saints whose statues grace the cathedrals of papal Rome.

Besides, these men, in the excess of their self-defined holiness, both ventured to make light of one of the divine

gifts, and to treat the love that leads to marriage as a sort of human weakness from which the highest degree of piety was to be wholly exempt. No wonder then that they should have been left to learn by sad experience the depth of their folly, and to furnish solemn warnings, through their matrimonial misfortunes, against all self-contrived sanctity, and all attempts to be wise above what is written.

CHAPTER IX.

SOME HISTORIC METHODISTS.

FOREMOST among the trophies of the Wesleyan revival in Ireland, if not in all the United Kingdom, stands the name of Adam Clarke. This immortal man, so mighty in the Scriptures, so loveable in his private character, and so ardent withal in his love for, and loyalty to, the leader and the principles of the Methodist revival, was born in the village of Moybeg, in the township of Cootinaglugg, in the parish of Kilchronaghan, in the barony of Loughinshaallin, in the county of Londonderry, in the province of Ulster, Ireland, sometime about 1760, though, as the parish clerk failed to enter him in the register of the church, the exact date of his advent is unknown.

He was a Scotch-Irishman of English descent; the Clarkes having crossed over from England in the seventeenth century, and settled in the region of Carrickfergus, where the great-great-grandfather, William Clarke, was an estated gentleman as well as a sturdy Quaker. The father, John Clarke, M.A., was intended for the Church; but before finishing his course at Trinity College, Dublin, he became so charmed with a young Scotch lassie, that he forsook divinity for matrimony, and began life for himself as a parish school-master.

The mother of Adam Clarke was a descendant of the Laird of Dowart, in the Hebrides, the chief of the clan of the MacLeans.

In his youth, Adam was a stout lad, full of life, and not over-fond of his books. He delighted in the wild Irish stories of ghosts and fairies, but for the Latin grammar, and more especially for mathematics, he had a thorough abhorrence. His father had a little bit of land, which he cultivated

according to the rules laid down by Virgil in the *Georgics*; and Adam and his brother were employed alternately in work on the farm and helping one another along in the rudiments of classical learning, of which their father was a notable master. His mother was a rigid Presbyterian, and taught him the Catechism of the Westminster Assembly, while his father was an Episcopalian, and taught him the Apostles' Creed—a mixture of doctrine which suited the boy well enough, for he was of a religious turn of mind; but he was in great danger of growing up a dunce in other respects; the only studies to which he would apply himself being the English translation of the Fables of Æsop, Robinson Crusoe, the native fairy literature of Ireland, and the art of magic, which latter was taught him by a travelling tinker who had strayed into Cootinaglugg.

One day, after being scolded by the master and mocked by his fellow-pupils for his slow progress in his tasks, he declares that in his agony of shame he “felt as if something had broken within him,” and, seizing his book, he began to study with a sense of power which was quite a revelation to him, and from that moment he became the wonder of the school.

During the year 1777 a Methodist preacher, by the name of John Brettel, began preaching in the neighbourhood, in barns, stables, school-houses, and in the open air, and young Clarke, now about seventeen years old, was among his most attentive hearers. His father approved the teachings of the itinerant as “the genuine doctrine of the Established Church,” while his Presbyterian mother, with equal admiration, declared, “This is the doctrine of the Reformers; this is the true, unadulterated Christianity;” therefore the preacher was made doubly welcome at the school-master’s little farm-house, which thenceforth became a “ministers’ tavern.”

After an awakening and conviction of sin, which was intelligent, protracted, and at the last marked with great agonies of mind, Adam was soundly converted. He was already a well-learned lad; for, though he had been obliged to spend his days on the farm, his nights afforded him time for study; and now that he had found Christ as his personal and present Saviour he straightway began to show Him to

others. He would often toil from four in the morning till six in the evening, and then walk three or four miles to a Methodist meeting. He also began in earnest to study the Scriptures, and presently to exhort in neighbouring villages, sometimes making a circuit of nine or ten hamlets on a single Sunday. He also applied himself with new diligence to the study of mathematics, philosophy, and the languages, thus laying the foundation for that varied and extensive learning in which he ranks with the most eminent of British scholars.

Sometime in the year 1782 one of the preachers of the Londonderry Circuit observing the promise of the lad, wrote to Mr. Wesley about him, and Wesley invited him over to the Kingswood School. On the passage from Ireland the vessel was boarded by a press-gang, and young Clarke had a narrow escape from being dragged into His Majesty's navy. The officer seized his hand to feel if it indicated hard work, but found it too white and soft for his liking, and so passed him by as unfit material of which to make a man-of-war's man, and Clarke made his way to the Methodist school.

At this time the Kingswood School was at its worst. In the following year, 1783, Mr. Wesley wrote concerning it “It must be mended or ended, for no school is better than the present school.” Poor Adam, who had arrived at Kingswood with only three-halfpence in his pocket, found to his dismay that his coming had not been expected, nor was his stay desired : and so far from being able to profit by the course of instruction, he found himself too good a scholar already to suit the convenience of his tutor. Being too poor to pay his way, he was lodged in a miserable little closet which opened off the chapel, where his scanty allowance of bread and milk was brought to him by a servant ; and, still further to his torment, he was compelled by the stewardess to anoint himself all over with sulphur as a safeguard to the institution against a certain cutaneous disease, which, coming from that unknown region called Ireland, it was presumed the young man might have brought over with him.

“And they Scotch people, too !” groans out poor Adam, who had exhibited a cuticle as fair as a baby's, all to no purpose ; and who was enduring this treatment as patiently as possible till the great Wesley himself should come.

A piece of good fortune, however, brightened those miserable weeks. One day while digging in the school-house garden—perhaps by way of making himself useful in return for the charity he was receiving—he turned up a bright half-guinea, with which, after vainly trying to find the rightful owner, he bought a Hebrew grammar, and this helped him to lay the foundation for that splendid Oriental learning in which he surpassed all the scholars of his time.

At length Mr. Wesley arrived at the school, the prison, the house of torture, and having tested the quality of the young Irishman, he said to him—

“Do you wish to devote yourself entirely to the work of God?”

“I wish to be and do whatever God pleases,” was the reply.

Mr. Wesley then laid his hand on the young man’s head, and prayed over him; an act which Clarke called his “ordination,” and with which he was so fully satisfied that he never sought any other.

A vacancy presently occurring on the Bradford Circuit, he was sent to that work. He was the youngest man in the whole itinerant fraternity, being now only about twenty-two years of age, and of such a youthful and ruddy appearance that he was generally called “the little boy,” but it very soon transpired that “the little boy” has the making of a great man. The Bradford Circuit was a four weeks’ circuit, comprising thirty-three preaching-places, in as many different towns and villages; wherefore the young recruit was obliged to spend a large part of his time on horseback, and to preach every day, each time to a new congregation; an arrangement well suited to the condition of the lad, who speedily acquired the Wesleyan habit of reading in the saddle; and, as one sermon would go a long way, he found ample time for pursuing his other studies.

In the life of Adam Clarke, written by his son, an incident is related which shows how nearly this great biblical scholar had been lost to the Church and the world. In 1782, while travelling the Bradford Circuit, he chanced to find a Latin sentence written on the wall of his chamber, to which he added, as being in the same vein, these lines of Virgil,

changing the last word to suit the wanderings of the preachers rather than those of Æneas :—

Quo fata trahunt, retrahuntque, sequamur. Per varios casus, per tot discrimina rerum, Tendimus in Cælum.

The next preacher who saw it, by way of reproving the pride of the young scholar, wrote underneath these words :—

“Did you write the above to show us that you could write Latin? For shame! Do send pride to hell, from whence it came. O young man, improve your time; eternity’s at hand.”

On his next round the “little boy preacher” read and accepted the reproof, and, falling on his knees, he vowed never to meddle with Greek or Latin again as long as he lived! A long time afterward, coming upon a French essay which pleased him, he translated it, and sent it to Mr. Wesley for his *Arminian Magazine*; and Wesley, who knew that ignorance and pride are twins, and that one of the best ways to drive out thoughts of self is to keep the mind full of sound knowledge, wrote to the young preacher accepting the piece, and charging him to cultivate his mind as far as circumstances would allow, and “not to forget anything he had ever learned.”

Alas! through the counsel of an ignorant, ambitious, and perhaps envious itinerant, Clarke had not looked at his Greek and Latin for nearly four years; but now he saw his error, and with the same teachable spirit, but under a better instructor, he begged the Lord to forgive his rash vow, and at once set about the task of recovering the knowledge he had nearly lost.

As a preacher he was wonderfully successful. His deep devotion to learning won for him the admiration of scholars and the degrees of Master of Arts and Doctor of Laws from the Scotch University of Aberdeen, while his warm Irish heart, his polite manners, and his Christian temper made him a universal favourite with the common people, who throughout the history of Methodism have shown such high admiration of real scholarship as to disprove the slander which charges the Wesleyan revival with hostility to learning.

The records of its ministry abound with the marvellous

successes of unlearned men, whose want of literary training was quite forgotten in view of the baptism of power which descended upon their heads and hearts. In view of such successes, some, both among the ministry and the laity, have rushed to the conclusion that scholarship and piety did not agree together, and the loud, empty tone in which these views have been set forth has by some superficial observers been mistaken for the voice of Methodism itself. But, so far from being the rule, this is only the exception. Methodist preachers have made more efforts and overcome more obstacles to acquire sound learning than any other class of men on earth, and Methodist congregations, though at first chiefly composed of people to whom ignorance was a sad necessity, have proved their appreciation of "book learning" by adopting as their prime favourites, in the pulpit and the platform, the most largely learned and the most thoroughly accomplished ministers of the Connection. In the highest circles as well as the lowest, native genius and rough common sense are preferred to pretentious exhibitions of the polish of the schools; but among the lowest, not less than among the highest, as these social distinctions go, ignorance is and always was regarded as contemptible in those who assumed to teach religion. Courtly manners and splendid powers, along with genuine Christian manhood—the want of which nothing can excuse—so far from putting the common people of Methodism in an unsympathetic attitude, always warm their hearts and call forth their loving admiration; and, in spite of the fact that so large a proportion of the approved course of liberal learning has been above their comprehension, and almost useless from their point of view, still the instinct of Methodism has upheld the academy and the college, and some of the brightest ornaments of Methodist pulpits and professors' chairs have been the children of the poor.

When the school of heraldry shall make for Methodist preachers a coat-of-arms, it will surely have a man on horse-back in its field; but, if the artist would be true to history, the itinerant must have an open book before him, resting on the horn of his saddle.

Clarke's Commentary is the chief foundation of his fame. Never has any other one man achieved such a triumph in

biblical exposition, especially of the Old Testament. Unaided and alone, with the cares of great societies pressing heavily upon him, at a time when the materials for the study of the Oriental tongues were far from perfect, he explored the mysteries of the original Greek and Hebrew Scriptures, tracing them through their translations into Arabic, Persian, Latin, Anglo-Saxon, French, Danish, etc.; following them through the Chaldee and Samaritan versions, and, in order to gather up the fragments that nothing might be lost, traversing the vast wilderness of Talmuds and Targums, as well as the cognate literature of all other known religions.

“In this arduous work,” he writes, “I have had no assistants, not even a single week’s help from an amanuensis, the help excepted which I received in the chronological department from my nephew, John Edward Clarke. I have laboured alone for twenty-five years previously to the work being sent to press, and fifteen years have been employed in bringing it through the press, so that nearly forty-five years of my life have been so consumed.” The first part of his commentary was published in 1810, the last in 1825.*

While preaching in London he was called into the committee of the British and Foreign Bible Society, and for several years its publications in the Oriental languages were largely under his direction. His only other literary work of any magnitude was his “Biographical Dictionary” in six volumes, published in 1802, by which he made his first fame as an author.

The wife of Adam Clarke was Miss Mary Cooke, an admirable and accomplished English lady. The marriage was an exceedingly happy one, though it was not brought about without a good deal of opposition. The pride of the parents was shocked at the thought of their daughter becoming the wife of a Methodist itinerant, and Mr. Wesley, learning the state of the case, declared that if his young preacher married the girl without the consent of her friends, he would turn him out of the Connection; but at length that great man, becoming aware of the admirable qualities of Miss

* That is, as edited by himself. A new edition, with numerous additional notes, has been recently issued by Ward and Lock. 1882.

Cooke, made intercession with her parents on Adam's behalf, and they were married in the Wanbridge Church on the 17th of April, 1788, and about a week after sailed for his appointment in the Norman Islands.

How he escaped from the Churchmanship of his father or the Presbyterianism of his mother does not appear in his biography. The whole family seem to have been captivated by the first Methodist preacher they ever heard, and it may be that the elasticity of the Irish nature will allow the indwelling of a whole brood of dogmatic theologies in a single Irish soul. But Dr. Clarke, with his generous nature, never could have been anything but an Arminian. Free grace was a doctrinal necessity to him : no predestination could stand in the way of any poor sinner who wanted to be good and go to glory. According to his hospitable ideas, the front door of heaven stood wide open day and night, and he was almost ready to believe there was a side door, or a back door, also, by which the animal creation might enter. And in this latter view he held with John Wesley, who regarded it as highly probable, from the visions of the future world seen and recorded by Scripture writers, that the redemption of Christ extended to the whole creation, which, Paul declares, had groaned and travailed in pain together, awaiting this very event. There are to be new heavens and a new earth, and Wesley, Clarke, and other equally wise and liberal doctors of theology, do not see why there should not be on that new earth, made out of the old one, representatives of the animal kingdom, at least all that are capable of domestication, with powers and dispositions as much improved in proportion as will be the powers and dispositions of human beings.

There was one difficult point in the orthodox creed which Dr. Clarke ventured to dispute, and for which he was severely taken to task by Richard Watson ; namely, the eternal Sonship of the Son of God. To the mind of the great Irish divine the words "Father" and "Son" necessarily carried with them the idea of a difference of age, which opinion it is the especial function of "the eternal Sonship" to deny. His notion, also, that the creature which tempted our first parents in the garden of Eden was not a serpent at all, but something

of a humanish shape—a monkey or a baboon, perhaps—was received with small respect ; for the gorilla, which, from his looks, might easily be the devil, had not yet been discovered, nor had the theory been much mooted that through this class of animals the rise, if not the fall, of the human race had been secured.

The commentary of Dr. Clarke and the hymns of Charles Wesley are the Methodist writings which have had the widest use outside of the Methodist Connection. The skill, the care, and the catholicity of the one has given it place among the best products of Christian scholarship, while the deep soul-knowledge and the divine inspiration of the other has been so widely felt and so highly prized, that now Charles Wesley belongs not only to the Methodists, but to the whole English-speaking world.

In 1795, and again in 1805, the Conference conferred on Dr. Clarke the highest honour then within the reach of the itinerants, by appointing him to the London Circuit, whose centre was the Methodist cathedral, City Road Chapel. Three times was he elected to the presidency of the British Wesleyan Conference, and at length, having won imperishable renown for himself, and worthily maintained the Wesleyan succession as a Christian scholar and author, he sunk under the weight of his literary labours, retired to a small estate called Haydon Hall, at Bayswater, then a Middlesex village, now a part of London, where, after nine invalid years, he departed this life on the 26th of August, 1832, at about the age of seventy-two.

The annals of Irish Methodism afford no more characteristic and delightful study than that of the career of Gideon Ouseley. Adam Clarke is far more famous, but he left old Ireland in his youth to become an Englishman for the rest of his life ; but Ouseley was a true son of Erin, to the manor born and bred, and in all respects, from first to last, an ideal Irish Methodist preacher.

His father was a comfortable farmer in the village of Dunmore, in the county of Galway, in the province of Connaught, a man who pretended to despise religion on account of the dissolute lives of some of its priests and ministers, but who, nevertheless, determined to bring up his

son Gideon for a parson, because that was a profitable trade. His mother, however, was a godly woman, who taught her children out of the Bible, and such other good books as Tillotson's "Sermons" and Young's "Night Thoughts:" rather heavy material for an Irishman in his childhood, but Gideon thrived well on this course of training, inasmuch as the Bible always stood first on the list.

When he was a well-grown lad, he was placed under the care of one of the old-time country school-masters, to be fitted for that literary Mecca of the Irish youth, Trinity College, Dublin; but before he was ready to enter, his father fell heir to a fine farm in the neighbouring county of Roscommon, which led him to change his views for his son Gideon, whom he now thought had a superior opening as a farmer.

While yet a boy, Gideon married, and with his girlish bride set up housekeeping on a small estate given them by her father. He was a lively lad, of a powerful frame, a leader in muscular sports, a dashing horseman, a prime favourite at fairs, hurling matches, horse-races, wakes, and weddings, full of wit, free with his money in gift or wager, and able to carry off his full share of punch from a drinking bout without becoming unsteady in the legs: a list of accomplishments which soon brought him to the end of his little fortune, and compelled him to return to Dunmore, where, in a drunken row, he was shot in the face and neck, by which he lost one of his eyes. Upon this he resolved to live a better life, but all his resolutions failed, and at length even his faithful wife despaired of his reform.

Sometime about the year 1788, when Ouseley was twenty-six years of age—he having been born in 1762—a detachment of the Fourth Irish Dragoons was stationed at Dunmore. Among them were several Methodists, who hired a large room at the village inn, where they set up a series of open meetings that at once became a wonder among the people; especially the singing of hymns, the praying without a book, and the talk that sounded like preaching, by men who did not claim to be priests or ministers, and had no sign of a manuscript before them.

"There must be some trick about it," said Ouseley, and

refused to visit the meetings; but at last he determined to examine into it. The result was that he discovered more than he had dreamed of, for he found out from the Methodists that he was a lost sinner, whose only hope of salvation was through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ; his conviction of sin became intense, and after a desperate struggle with the old nature, which was mightily strong in him, he one day fell down on his knees, alone in his house, and cried, “O God, I will submit!” upon which these words of Scripture came to his mind: “When the wicked man turneth away from his wickedness, . . . and doeth that which is lawful and right, he shall save his soul alive.” This comforted him greatly, and he at once began to break off his sins by righteousness, but it was some time before he found peace in believing.

Ouseley’s conversion, after long and deep conviction and many fruitless efforts to save himself, occurred on a Sunday morning in May, in the year 1791. It was a thorough and radical transformation from darkness to light; a clear and distinct witness of the Spirit to the pardon of his sins and his acceptance with God. He never wearied of telling about “that Sunday,” and how, when the blessing came, he was able to cry out, “My soul doth magnify the Lord, and my spirit doth rejoice in God my Saviour.”

It was a mighty and glorious conversion, and he declared it with all his heart, whereupon his old companions, hearing that Ouseley had joined the Methodists, made sure that the man must be going mad. Again and again the floods of grace broke over him, filling him with unspeakable joy and great hungering for more righteousness; and after fasting and praying for “a clean heart,” as his brethren taught him out of the Scriptures, he at length came into the enjoyment of the blessing of sanctification, and of “the peace of God which passeth all understanding.”

His was just the transparent, jubilant, full-orbed nature for grace to do its grandest work upon—even the grace of God does not make great Christians out of little souls—and straightway, in the fulness of salvation promised in the word of God, and preached by the old-time Methodists, he began to publish how great things the Lord had done for him

and in him. His deistical father regarded all this as only a part of the vagaries naturally to be looked for in such a mind ; but his wife, though for a time she was actually alarmed at his extravagant demonstrations of religious joy, came at length to understand the mystery, and accepted his Saviour as her own.

His call to the ministry, of which he gives this account, is quite in harmony with all the rest of his religious experience :—

“The voice said, ‘Gideon, go and preach the Gospel.’

“‘How can I go?’ says I. ‘O Lord God, I cannot speak, for I am a child.’

“‘Do you not know the disease?’

“‘O, yes, Lord, I do!’ says I.

“‘And do you not know the cure?’

“‘Indeed I do, glory be to Thy holy name!’ says I.

“‘Go, then, and tell them these two things, the disease and the cure. All the rest is nothing but talk.’

“And so here I am, these forty years just telling of the disease and the cure.”

Although the Ouseleys were of the higher class of Irish, who speak as good English as the great majority of Englishmen, Gideon had somehow learned the old Irish tongue, and when he began to preach in it to the peasants in the highways and hedges, and especially in the grave-yards at funerals, they listened with wonder and delight.

The curate of his parish, who was not very well spoken of for sound morals, let alone theology, once preached a hot sermon against the Methodists, and Ouseley stood up in his pew after it was over, and answered him out of the Scripture, for which offence against the peace and dignity of the Church he was near being sent to prison : the high respectability of his family alone saving him that disgrace. His father, who had manifested little concern about his son when he would come home drunk from a fair or a fight, now set vigorously to work to reform him of his Methodism. He threatened to disown him if he did not give up preaching ; but his good wife stood by him, and chose with him to suffer the loss of all things rather than be false to the call of the Lord : thus the farming ceased, and the preaching went on.

It was his habit to attend the wakes and "berrins" (buryings) in all the country round, which in those days were almost always the most hilarious revels that the wild Irish nature and strong Irish whisky could produce. Every one was expected to do his best to make the occasion as lively as possible, by way of favour to the living and compliment to the dead; and when the liquor was over-plentiful, and the grief was over-strong, the wake was in danger of ending in a fight. In the midst of these mortuary carousals Ouseley would come, and with the utmost friendliness, and that courtesy which is the birthright of every genuine son of Erin, he would manage somehow or other to turn the revel into a very effective religious service.

On one occasion a crowd of people were kneeling around a grave where the priest was droning the mass for the dead in Celtic Latin, when a stranger rode up and joined the mourners. As the priest went on with his reading in a tongue of which the poor peasants could not understand a single word, the stranger caught up passage after passage, especially such as contained Scripture allusions, and translated them into Irish; saying to the people, in a tone of the utmost tenderness and affection, "Do you hear that?" "Listen to that now!"

The people were completely melted, and the priest was overwhelmed with amazement. After the mass was over, Ouseley gave them a little exhortation, pointed them to Jesus Christ, by the faith of whom they might one day die in peace and go to heaven, and then mounted his horse and rode away.

"Who is it, Father ——?" asked the mourners, as he was departing.

"I don't know at all," said the priest; "I think he must be an angel, for sure no mortal man could do the like o' that."

Years afterwards the preacher met a man who reminded him of the scene, saying, "Don't ye remimber the berrin', an' ye explainin' to us the mass that the praste was redin'?"

"I do," said Ouseley.

"Ye tould us that day how to find the Lord; and, blessed be His howly name! I've had Him in me heart iver since."

In 1797, the year before the Irish rebellion, Ouseley, under a clear impression of a divine call, removed to Ballymote in the county of Sligo, commenced a tour of evangelistic labour on his own account, and was soon honoured with a place in the black hole of the Sligo barracks for "disturbing the peace by preaching." At the same time the minister of the Irish Presbyterian Church, the most correct of all the "regular Christians" in that island, was accustomed to perform the service of his parish church on a Sunday morning with a surplice over his shooting-jacket, and then spend the afternoon in hunting; and no one made any complaint.

Many a poor "rebel" in the rebellion of '98 did Ouseley visit in prison, and help to prepare for death; and in order to be, like his Master, no respecter of persons, he studied the missal and catechism of the Church of Rome, as well as the theology of the Presbyterians, Episcopalians, and Methodists, and thus he was able to reach the hearts of all classes of sinners, for whom there is only one way to be saved. In those days of horror and blood he was often arrested, both by the scouts of the Government and the rebels, but he always preached his way out of their clutches, for it was evident that he was nothing less or more than a minister of the Lord Jesus Christ.

At the next Wesleyan Conference after the Irish rebellion Dr. Coké proposed his plan for a mission among the Irish-speaking people of that country, and on the nomination of William Hamilton, who had superintended the Sligo Circuit, Gideon Ouseley was appointed to the work, along with James M'Quigg and Charles Graham. He was then thirty-six years of age.

It was firmly believed by the people among whom these three men were sent, that the devil could not speak the Irish language; and when these three singular beings suddenly appeared on horseback at a fair, or a wake, or a festival of some local patron saint, and began to preach the Gospel in the Irish tongue, the simple peasants accepted their words as a revelation from heaven, and sometimes would actually fall down before them in adoration, as they were wont to do before the shrine of St. Patrick or the Virgin. On the other

hand, they were often assaulted by men who claimed to be “respectable,” and who would now and then raise a mob of those same peasants against them.

One day a handful of mud was thrown into Ouseley’s face while he was preaching.

“Did I deserve that, boys?” he asked of the crowd.

“Indade ye didn’t,” answered they; and when the ruffian attempted to repeat the insult, they fell to beating him “fit to knock a score of devils out of him:” so volatile are the spirits of the people of that land.

The fame of the Irish preachers flew like wild-fire all over the country. God was in the word, and sinners of all religions and of no religion were stricken right and left. They “stormed the little towns as they rode along,” not stopping to dismount and look for a pulpit, but preaching and praying in their saddles; thus “riding their circuits” more literally than ever was done before. Market days were harvest days for them. They would ride into the midst of the crowd, strike up a Methodist hymn set to some well-known Irish air, or break out into an Irish exhortation at the top of their voices: and, be it known, the top of a voice like Ouseley’s was something to remember; ringing out high and clear above the rumble of carts and the noises of cattle, pigs, and poultry, and full often rising in stentorian shouts to assert itself above the din when some crowd of bigots or besotted ruffians would try to howl him down.

There was no lack of audiences; the great question was how to control them. Ouseley was as full of Irish wit as he was of Methodist religion, and he had plenty of use for both. With a catholicity of spirit and manner which was so successfully imitated by the great American Evangelist in his recent revival campaign in Dublin, this Irish missionary was ready to preach the Gospel to Protestants and Papists alike, and from first to last through his forty years’ career great numbers of sinners of both of these classes were brought to a saving knowledge of Christ. He had the sense to remember that there was a great deal of good at the bottom of the papal mummeries; for names he did not care a pin; therefore he would talk to a crowd of Romanists about the blessed Virgin to their hearts’ content, and then

wind up with a stirring appeal based on some of the words of "her Son." He was once set upon by a crowd of the peasantry full of zeal for "Howly Rome," when the following dialogue ensued :—

"Clare out o' this! We don't want ony Methodis prachin' in these parts."

"See here, my dears; just listen a bit, and I'll tell ye something that will please ye."

"We won't be plased wid ony thing from the likes o' *you*."

"Try me and see. I want to talk to ye about her ye love—the blessed Virgin Mary, the mother of the Lord."

"Well, what do *you* know about the Howly Mother?"

Ouseley, seizing his advantage, began to tell them a story of a wedding to which the blessed Virgin and her Son were invited; and how she induced Him to work a miracle for them by turning water into wine. He came presently to her instruction to the servants, "Whatsoever He saith unto you, do it;" from which text, with this introduction, he was permitted to preach them a rousing Gospel sermon.

At other times he would assault their blind superstitions with the most unanswerable arguments, as thus: One day a gang of furious blackguards attacked his congregation, and attempted to force their way through the ranks of his friends, who strove to protect their preacher by keeping a solid circle round him. Ouseley stopped at once, and said :—

"Make way for these gentlemen. I have important business with them."

Everybody was surprised at this, none more so than the gang of roughs themselves. Then, turning to the men who had come to "bate the life out of him," he said :—

"My friends, are you acquainted with the priest of this parish?"

"We are."

"Will you take a message to him for me?"

"We will. What is it?"

"I want to have him tell me if he can make a fly; not a fishing fly, ye understand, but one of them little biting, buzzing fellows, like that one sittin' on the neck of my horse. Can he make a fly out of a bit of clay?"

“Shure what’s the use of askin’ him that? Ony body knows he can’t do it.”

“Well, then, my dears, if the priest can’t make a little fly out of a bit of clay, how can he make the Lord Jesus Christ out of a bit of bread?”

His antagonists were not smart enough to meet this attack on the popish doctrine of transubstantiation, and feeling as if they had been beaten in argument—a wound which sometimes hurts an Irishman more than a broken head—they retired from the field, and Ouseley went on with his discourse.

Great was the power which attended their word, as Ouseley, Graham, and Hamilton roamed the counties of Sligo, Roscommon, Mayo, Cavan, Armagh, Tyrone, and, indeed, over almost the whole northern half of Ireland; seeking out the most neglected regions, and preaching of sin and salvation, “the disease and the cure.” If rhetoric be “the art of persuasion,” these men were very princes in rhetoric; besides, in what is called oratory they might have been distinguished, if they had cared to be so. The saddle was their rostrum, and two peasants in a bog or by a roadside made them a worthy congregation: not that they lacked for crowds; being often attended by great multitudes of eager, ignorant, \ impessible people, who listened to this Irish version of the Gospel as a message straight from heaven to their own particular selves, and to whom these cavalry preachers were little less than angels on horseback.

Conversions multiplied, many of them of the same pronounced and demonstrative type as that of Ouseley himself, and their holy ecstasies were sometimes mistaken by the priests and parsons for demoniacal possession. One Catholic convert, under the ministry of Graham, was brought to the priest of the parish to be cured of his “bad religion,” and his reverence, it is said, actually attempted the miracle of casting the “Methodist devil” out of him; using forms of prayer appropriate to the exorcism of evil spirits, and pronouncing over him, with all solemnity, these words, “Come out, Graham: come out of him, I say!” but, as is so often the case with Romish miracles, the power in this instance utterly failed to work:

For years these sturdy men carried their lives in their hands ; preaching sometimes amid showers of eggs, potatoes, bludgeons, and stones, and at other times surrounded by weeping, praying, loving multitudes, who knelt at their feet, ready to kiss the very ground on which they stood. Again and again they were set upon by mobs who were bent on "putting them out of the way," but the Lord always made a way for their escape.

They frequently enlivened their sermons by hymns in the Irish language, while the multitude sobbed aloud, or waved to and fro, swayed by the simple music. Some of the hearers would be weeping ; others, on their knees, were calling upon the Virgin and the saints ; others still were shouting questions or defiance to the preachers, and throwing sticks or stones at them ; some rolled up their sleeves to attack, and others to defend them, and frequently the confusion culminated in a genuine Hibernian riot, the parties rushing pell-mell upon each other, roaring, brandishing shillalahs, and breaking heads, till brought to order at last by the intervention of the magistrates or a platoon of troops from the barracks.

These riots were charged against the missionaries, but to these criticisms Ouseley replied, "You have riots in attempting to govern this people, but you do not therefore abandon your efforts to govern them ; we, too, have confusions in our attempts to save this people, but that is no reason for abandoning our efforts toward their salvation."

In this wild fashion thousands of this wretched population were converted, set to studying the Bible, and brought into the fellowship of the Protestant churches. The glorious results overbalanced all objections of "irregularity," and the best people of the island at length became the admirers and supporters of "the black caps," as they were called from their habit of wearing black velvet caps to protect their heads from the weather and from blows when they took off their hats for preaching or prayer.

Ouseley's chief publication, "The Defense of Old Christianity," is a fair-sized volume, full and running over with wit, wisdom, argument, and Scripture. The book did good service in its day in enlightening honest inquirers concerning the errors of Rome, and many are the souls who have been

brought to Christ by its means. Other smaller publications are extant, and further illustrate the controversial skill of this Irish Methodist hero, who for forty years, with tongue and pen, preached the word of life to a class of persons who, it has been thought by most Protestant believers, were altogether beyond the reach of evangelical truth.

The death of Gideon Ouseley occurred on the 14th of May, 1839, the centennial year of British Methodism, in the seventy-eighth year of his age. In spite of the weight of years, "Father Ouseley" persisted to the last in his work of preaching "the disease and the cure." The singleness of his heart was one of the chief characteristics of his career. He had nothing else in the world to do but to help sinners to be saved, and whether he were in the pulpit, in his saddle, at a fair, on the road, or sitting in a peasant's cabin with the children climbing all over him, he was ever finding in the simple sayings or doings of the people a guide to their better judgment, or the shortest road to their hearts. Nor was it only among the peasantry that he was beloved. His native genius, wide knowledge, and transparent soul gained him multitudes of admirers among the educated and refined; but above all these honours was the oft-recurring joy he felt as some stranger would grasp his hand and say:—

"Do you remember such a wake, or such a fair, or such a horseback sermon? It was there you led me to the Lord."

His last words were, "I have no fear of death. God's Spirit is my support." Graham, his early comrade, died in 1824, and William Hamilton, the chief collaborator of his later years, in 1816.

The theological soil and climate of Scotland were not favourable to the growth of Methodism. John Calvin and John Knox had so strong a hold upon the Scottish mind and heart, that there was little room therein for John Wesley. Some time previous to 1754 a small Society had been formed at Edinburgh, and in that year Mr. Wesley paid a visit to the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland, composed of one hundred and fifty ministers, of whose deliberations he makes the following record:—

"A single question took up the whole time, which, when I went away, seemed to be as far from a conclusion as ever;

namely, 'Shall Mr. Lindsay be removed to Kilmarnock parish or not?' The argument for it was, 'He has a large family, and this living is twice as good as his own.' The argument against it was, 'The people are resolved not to hear him, and will leave the kirk if he comes.' If, then, the real point in view had been, as their law directs, *maius bonum Ecclesiæ* [the greater good of the Church], instead of taking up five hours the debate might have been determined in five minutes.

"I rode to Dundee, and about half an-hour after six preached on the side of a meadow near the town. Poor and rich attended. Indeed, there is seldom fear of wanting a congregation in Scotland. But the misfortune is, they know everything, so they learn nothing.

"Lodging with a sensible man, I inquired particularly into the present discipline of the Scotch parishes. In one parish, it seems, there are twelve ruling elders; in another there are fourteen. And what are these? Men of great sense and deep experience? Neither one nor the other. But they are the *richest* men in the parish."

The personal qualifications of Mr. Wesley could hardly fail to command respect and even admiration among the thoughtful people of Scotland; but his influence was not sufficient to gain for his people any considerable share of the respect which was paid to himself. After his death Methodism did not thrive north of the Tweed, as appears from a mention made of it in 1826 by Dr. Adam Clarke, who says: "I consider Methodism as having no hold of Scotland but in Glasgow and Edinburgh. If all the other chapels were dispersed, it would be little loss to Methodism, and a great saving of money, which might be better employed."

And now there appears a memorable name in connection with the Methodist revival; it is that of the saintly and scholarly Fletcher. The fame of this godly man is among the most precious of all the historic treasures of Methodism. Mr. Wesley's acquaintance with him began in 1752, and continued uninterrupted between thirty and forty years. "We were," says Wesley, "of one heart and one soul. We had no secrets between us. For many years we did not purposely hide anything from each other."

John William de la Flechere, the youngest son of an officer of the French army, was born at Nyon, in Switzerland, September 12, 1729. He was early distinguished by his brilliant talents in the school at Geneva, to which he was sent for a classical education, and no less for his tender conscience and deeply religious nature. He was learned in the German as well as in the French language, both of which were spoken in the French cantons, and also in mathematics and Hebrew; being, next to Wesley and Clarke, the most scholarly man whose name stands connected with the early history of the Methodist revival.

His piety and learning led his parents to mark out for him a priestly career, but John preferred the camp to the Church, giving as his reason that he did not feel himself worthy to enter the holy office. Somehow, also, he had conceived a hatred of the Geneva doctrine of predestination, as set down in the standards of the Swiss Protestant Church, by its great prince and prophet, John Calvin; and as he would be required to profess his faith therein before he would be allowed to preach the Gospel, he resolved to lay down the catechism and take up the sword.

For this purpose he went to Lisbon, where he gathered a company of Swiss adventurers, accepted a captain's commission from the king of Portugal, and was ordered to join a man-of-war, which was just about to sail for Brazil; but a painful accident befell him at his hotel on the day before the vessel's departure, which kept him in bed for a considerable time. The ship sailed away without him, and never was heard of again. His next thought was to visit England, where he studied the English language, and in 1752 he was engaged as a private tutor in the family of Thomas Hall, Esq., a country gentleman of Shropshire.

Mr. Fletcher was as good as his word. He discovered, and was admitted to, the Society at the Foundry, where he learned the true way of salvation by faith, and after great struggles of soul he began to walk therein. He had always been counted very religious, and received the “premium for piety” at the Geneva University, on account of his admirable essays on religious subjects. He had practised various mortifications of the body, as fasting, vigils, solitude, and

other pious practices ; but now he saw himself a sinner, and cast himself wholly on Christ for salvation. His conversion was clear, radical, and complete. Peace took the place of anxiety, and his efforts after self-righteousness gave place to entire consecration to, and dependence upon, the work and the merits of the Saviour. His heart was now turned to the ministry, and, through the kindness of his patron, he was offered the living of Dunham, a small parish with a large salary, amounting to four hundred pounds a year ; but Mr. Fletcher had become interested in the people in a mining region, and had preached at a place called Madeley to a few wretched, neglected colliers, whom he with considerable effort had succeeded in bringing together, and therefore hesitated to accept the brilliant offer of his friend. Madeley was a poor parish, with a miserable old church and a salary in proportion, but it suited Fletcher better than Dunham, where, he declared, "there was too much money, and too few souls," while the region about Madeley swarmed with vicious and neglected sinners. His patron therefore arranged with the vicar of Madeley to exchange his meagre living for the fat one at Dunham, thus leaving a vacancy at the former place, to which Fletcher was soon appointed.

His zeal and faithfulness speedily raised a persecution against him ; indeed, in the estimation of those easy-going religionists and semi-insensible sinners, he must have been a very uncomfortable man. Finding the people did not come to church, he went to seek them in their homes ; held out-of-door services whenever opportunity offered ; and when some of his parishioners excused their absence from public worship on the ground that they were tired and sleepy on Sunday morning, after a whole week's work, and could not wake up in time to make themselves and their children ready for church, he assumed the office of bellman, and early on the Sabbath mornings for several months he tramped the Madeley streets, with a large bell in his hand, ringing the people out of Sunday morning naps, and out of their excuse for staying away from the house of God.

In 1768, Mr. Fletcher was appointed by Lady Huntingdon to the presidency of her Theological School at Trevecca, which duties he assumed in addition to his Madeley pastorate.

Mr. Benson, who was the head master of the school, says that on occasions of his visits he was received as if he had been an "angel of God." Prayer, praise, love, and zeal, all ardent, elevated above what one would think attainable in this state of frailty, were the elements in which he continually lived. Languages, arts, sciences, grammar, rhetoric, logic, even divinity itself, as it is called, were all laid aside when he appeared in the school-room among the students. They seldom hearkened long before they were all in tears, and every heart caught fire from the flame that burned in his soul."

Closing these addresses, he would say, "As many of you as are athirst for the fulness of the Spirit of God follow me into my room." Many usually hastened thither, and it was like going into the holiest of holies. Two or three hours were spent there in such prevailing prayer as seemed to bring heaven down to earth. "Indeed," says Benson, "I frequently thought, while attending to his heavenly discourse and divine spirit, that he was so different from, and superior to, the generality of mankind, as to look more like Moses or Elijah, or some prophet or apostle come again from the dead, than a mortal man dwelling in a house of clay!"

Such was the man who was forced to resign his presidency of Trevecca College because he was not a believer in the Genevan doctrine of election and predestination. Lady Huntingdon had been greatly disturbed on account of some doctrinal views set forth by her old friend Wesley in the minutes of his Conference in 1770, and, lest the "damnable heresy" of free grace should creep in among the callow young theologues at Trevecca, she determined to test the soundness of her teachers and pupils, and all who did not disavow Mr. Wesley's theology were warned to quit the college. This action led to the immediate resignation of President Fletcher and to the dismissal of Professor Benson, who says, "I had been discharged wholly and solely because I did not believe the doctrine of absolute predestination."

The name of Fletcher is associated in the minds of many Methodists with the doctrine of Christian perfection, of which he was, and is, one of the ablest defenders; and, what was better, Mr. Fletcher was himself an example of the theories

he held. There are few severer tests of a man's temper than that afforded by religious controversy; and to the everlasting praise of Fletcher let it be remembered that he maintained for years one of the sharpest discussions with the Calvinists, involving the most vital points in practical as well as dogmatic religion, and, though treated with severity and sometimes scurrility by his adversaries, he from first to last maintained the manners and spirit of a gentleman and a Christian.

In that series of papers called "Checks to Antinomianism"—which have ever since been reckoned among the Methodist classics—he, with a sharp knife, a steady hand, and an even temper, dissected and exposed the malformations and hidden corruptions of the system of theology set forth in the "Institutes" of John Calvin, and in the controversial works of Toplady, Rowland Hill, and other divines of the Calvinistic school in the eighteenth century. He was a terrible adversary, not only because of the relentless vigour with which he hunted down the false doctrines, but also because of the faultlessness of his personal character, which gave his opponents no chance to evade the force of his arguments by raising some side issue concerning the conduct of their author.

The word "antinomianism," once so common in the mouth of Methodist preachers, is now so seldom heard, that a definition of it may be of service. It is composed of two Greek words, *anti*, against, and *nomos*, law, and was used to describe that class of inferences from the doctrine of "unconditional election" whereby sinners were led to excuse their continuance in sin until God, by his "effectual calling" and "irresistible grace," should come and bring them to salvation. Modern Calvinists sometimes become angry when the monstrous and legitimate conclusions of the Geneva theory are pointed out, and modern Methodists are sometimes accused of unfairness for so doing; but there are old men in the Methodist Church who can still remember the time when the battle between "free will" and "bond will" was waged with vigour both in England and America, and when the great obstacle in the way of bringing sinners to repentance was the fact that they had become Antinomians, and were

"waiting for God's time." "If I am elected, I shall certainly be saved, and if I am not elected, there is no use of repenting," was a common plea on the part of those who were invited to seek the Lord; and to Fletcher belongs the honour of furnishing the best armoury of logical weapons with which that strong delusion has now been driven out of the Church and almost out of the world.

Among Mr. Fletcher's parishioners at Madeley there were a few who felt themselves too highly respectable to need the plain and searching words in which the good vicar was accustomed to instruct the larger and poorer portion of his flock, and who accordingly would leave the church when the liturgical part of the service was concluded, thus escaping the sermon altogether. In order to bring to the attention of these persons the unwelcome truth that rich people are sinners, and in danger of going to hell, as well as poor people, unless they "repent and believe the gospel," Fletcher published a series of five sermons, with the title of "An Appeal to Matter of Fact and Common Sense; or, A Rational Demonstration of Man's Corrupt and Lost Estate;" which he sent forth among his aristocratic parishioners, with the following characteristic preface:—

"TO THE PRINCIPAL INHABITANTS OF THE PARISH OF MADELEY, IN THE COUNTY OF SALOP.

"GENTLEMEN,—You are no less entitled to my private labours than the inferior class of my parishioners. As you do not choose to partake with them of my evening instruction, I take the liberty to present you with some of my morning meditations. May these well-meant endeavours of my pen be more acceptable to you than those of my tongue; and may you carefully read in your closets what you have perhaps inattentively heard in the church. I appeal to the Searcher of hearts that I had rather impart truth than receive tithes. You kindly bestow the latter upon me: grant me, I pray, the satisfaction of seeing you favourably receive the former from, gentlemen, your affectionate minister and obedient servant,

"J. FLETCHER.

"*Madeley, 1772.*"

In 1771, Mr. Fletcher was united in marriage with Miss Mary Bosanquet, a woman who was his exact complement; and the two became one according to the evident intention of Him who contrived and established the institution of marriage.

This lady, who, if she had been a papist, would now be venerated as a saint, and whose name stands first among the women who may be called the deaconesses of Methodism, was born at Leytonstone, in Essex, in 1739. Her family were wealthy, and intended her to shine as a lady of fashion; but while yet a child she became the subject of religious impressions, through the influence of a maid-servant who was one of "the people called Methodists," and resolved to give herself to a life of devotion. When her parents discovered that she was in danger of becoming a Methodist, for which class of persons they had no small disgust, they dismissed the maid-servant, took away all the books she had given the young lady, and afterward moved to London, where they endeavoured to entice her into a life of pleasure. But Mary somehow found out the Methodist Society at the Foundry, and became acquainted with that eminent Christian woman, Mary Ryan, one of Wesley's class-leaders, by whom she was led to a true knowledge of Christ.

When she became of age, her father demanded that she should promise not to attempt to make "Christians" of her brothers, or else leave his house.

The young lady answered, "I think, sir, I dare not consent to that."

"Then you force me to put you out of my house," said the father; and accordingly his daughter left her home, and took private lodgings for herself and her maid. She had a little fortune in her own right, and now devoted herself and it to works of charity, becoming first a class-leader and then a *preacher*. In 1763 she removed from London to her native town of Leytonstone, and established in one of her own houses a charity school for orphans, where also she held the meetings of her Methodist Society. In addition to her home duties she made short preaching tours among the neglected sinners of the country round; and so great was her success, and so excellent her influence, that even Wesley was forced

to admit that for *this* woman to speak in the congregation, provided she did not "intrude into the pulpit," was manifestly no shame at all, but only an exception to the general rule, such as St. Paul himself allowed at Corinth.

During the brief period of their married life at Madeley Mrs. Fletcher entered heartily into the labours of her husband; they built a number of chapels for the poor, and thus established a little diocese or circuit of their own, within which the Gospel so fully triumphed, that those who travelled through it years afterward were often reminded of the labours of the saintly vicar and his devoted and talented wife.

On the 14th of August, 1785, less than five years after his marriage, this almost peerless Christian of modern times died of pulmonary consumption; let us rather say, he was promoted to a higher life. But his work was left in competent hands. For thirty years Mrs. Fletcher continued to be the centre of a wide circle of gospel work, in which her fortune, her talents, and her piety made her pre-eminent. Next after the Countess of Huntingdon, she was doubtless the most notable, as well as the most widely useful, Christian lady of her time. Her death occurred December 9, 1814.

The Fletcher Memorial College and Chapel, erected at Lausanne, in Switzerland, is one of the many monuments to the name and fame of this saintly man. The Lausanne mission, which was commenced in 1840, although afflicted by divisions and persecutions, both political and theological, is now the centre of a large and growing interest, and the seat of a training college for the French Wesleyan preachers.

CHAPTER X.

TRIALS AND TRIUMPHS.

THE revolt of the American colonies involved the Methodists in new troubles and conflicts. The great enthusiasm with which the Methodist missions to America had been commenced was shortly chilled by the mutterings of the War of the Revolution. Mr. Wesley, with whom loyalty to the King was a part of his religion, and who had now come to be one of the most influential men in the kingdom, was at first understood to be in sympathy with the colonists, and it was also well known that he was an ardent advocate of peace. In two powerful sermons at the old Foundry he pleaded for amicable settlement with the rebels in America; but shortly afterward a pamphlet written by the famous Dr. Johnson, entitled "Taxation no Tyranny," fell into his hands, and turned him so completely about that he revised the piece, making it better in several respects, as shorter, plainer, and less spiteful, and then published it in his own name, under the title of "A Calm Address to our American Colonies."

Johnson and Wesley were good friends, and it is to be presumed that the above piece of business was fully understood between them. In his version of the case, Johnson declared the colonists to be "a race of convicts, who ought to be thankful for anything we allow them short of hanging." Wesley's own recollections of Georgia were much to the same purpose; therefore it is not to be wondered at that he should incline to the opinion that these persons, who had for many years enjoyed the clemency as well as the bounty of the mother country, ought now to be willing to do something toward paying back the money which it

had cost to establish and defend them in their new homes across the sea.

These were days of great plainness of speech. Persons calling themselves gentlemen and Christians were not above using the most violent and scurrilous language in pamphlets and newspapers against those who differed from them in opinion. Mr. Wesley had often suffered such abuse from his Calvinistic and high-church enemies, though his own courtesy in debate was worthy of closer imitation. Perhaps some allowance ought to be made for his adversaries on account of their suffering under his terrible logic; and having so little else with which to answer, it was only natural that they should rave and scold. But now the arch-Methodist had been caught in his own trap. He had at first committed himself to the cause of the colonists, and now he was out in a tract espousing the side of the King!

Thereupon the whole pack, with the pious Toplady at their head, rushed after their dreaded antagonist in full cry. They called him bad names, they charged him with bad motives, said he was trying to win royal favour for himself and for his friends, charged him with "stealing the thunder" of the Johnsonian Jove; and, not content with hard words, the Rev. A. Toplady, smarting under the controversial wounds lately received at Wesley's hand, published a tract against him under the very remarkable title of "An Old Fox Tarr'd and Feathered!" with a frontispiece to match, representing Mr. Wesley as Reynard in spectacles, gown, and bands.

It is not easy to discern the exact force of the figurative language used in the title of this remarkable piece, since foxes, even when caught, are not usually tarred and feathered; but perhaps the reverend gentleman's spite got the better of his rhetoric, and thereby mixed his figures a little. Why he should have been inflamed with such a sudden fury of affection for the rebellious colonists is also a fair question, and one equally difficult to answer, except on the theory that he did not love his king the less, but hated John Wesley more. And this is the very same Toplady who wrote that glorious hymn—

"Rock of ages, cleft for me,
Let me hide myself in Thee."

Some of Mr. Wesley's friends, as well as his enemies, were inclined to censure him for turning politician. This is a point upon which opinions must differ, but it is certain that the part which he took in this great political struggle made him hosts of enemies. Within three weeks forty thousand copies of his "Calm Address" were printed and put into circulation, and excited so much anger among the English friends of the revolted colonists, that they would willingly have burned both him and his Address together; but, on the other hand, the Government were so well pleased with his little tract, that copies were ordered to be distributed at the doors of all the metropolitan churches, and it is said that one of the highest officers of State waited upon him to ask whether the Government could in any way be of service to himself or his people.

Wesley replied that he looked for no favours, and only desired the continuance of civil and religious privileges, but he afterward expressed himself as sorry that he had not requested to be made a royal missionary, with the privilege of preaching in all the English churches.

The "Calm Address to the Colonists" produced such a sensation, that in 1777 Mr. Wesley was moved to issue another "Calm Address to the Inhabitants of England," in which he endeavours to convince his countrymen that they are already in the enjoyment of greater liberties than are the colonists who are fighting for freedom; that, in the confederate provinces of America, after bawling for liberty, no liberty is left; that liberty of the press, religious liberty, and civil liberty are nonentities; that the lords of Congress are as absolute as the Emperor of Morocco; whereas in England the fullest liberty is enjoyed as to religion, life, body, and goods. He confesses that there are some Methodists who hate the King and all his ministers, but as for himself, he would no more continue in fellowship with such persons than with Sabbath-breakers, or thieves, or common swearers.

For once in his life Wesley's loyalty outran his good sense. Almost immediately his enemies rushed into print to abuse him, representing him as "spouting venom," calling him "Father Johnnie," accusing him of telling barefaced lies; and

in the *Gospel Magazine* a poem was published, reviling him in unmeasured terms, closing with this couplet:—

“O think of this, thou gray-haired sinner,
When Satan picks thy bones for dinner.”

At the laying of the corner-stone of the City Road Chapel Mr. Wesley re-asserted the loyalty of himself and his followers to the Established Church of England. He made also an unhappy reference to the separation between himself and the late Mr. Whitefield, (an account of whose closing years and death in America will be found in a later chapter,) because of the strong prejudice of the latter against the Church, into which state of mind that good man had been beguiled by conversing with dissenters.

As might have been expected, this roused the fury of some of his old antagonists, and the Rev. Rowland Hill rushed into print with a scurrilous pamphlet of forty pages, entitled “Imposture Detected, and the Dead Vindicated; in a Letter to a Friend: containing some gentle Strictures on the False and Libellous Harangue lately delivered by Mr. John Wesley, upon his laying the first stone of his new Dissenting Meeting-house, near the City Road.” Wesley’s sermon is described as “a wretched harangue, from which the blessed name of Jesus is almost totally excluded.” “By only erasing about half a dozen lines from the whole,” says the Rev. Mr. Hill, “I might defy the shrewdest of his readers to discover whether the *lying apostle* of the Foundry be a Jew, a Papist, a Pagan, or a Turk.” He speaks of “the late ever-memorable Mr. Whitefield” being “scratched out of his grave by the claws of a designing wolf,” meaning, of course, Wesley: he brands Wesley as “a libeller,” “a dealer in stolen wares,” and “as being as unprincipled as a rook and as silly as a jackdaw, first pilfering his neighbour’s plumage, and then going proudly forth, displaying his borrowed tail to the eyes of a laughing world.” “Persons that are toad-eaters to Mr. John Wesley stand in need of very wide throats, and that which he wishes them to swallow is enough to choke an elephant.” “Venom distils from his graceless pen.” “Mr. Whitefield is blackened by the venomous quill of this gray-headed enemy to all righteousness.” “Wesley is a crafty slanderer, an unfeeling

reviler, a liar of the most gigantic magnitude, a wretch, a miscreant apostate, whose perfection consists in his perfect hatred of all goodness and good men." "You cannot love the Church unless you go to Wesley's meeting-house; nor be a friend to the established bishops, priests, and deacons, unless you admire Wesley's ragged legion of preaching barbers, cobblers, tinkers, scavengers, draymen, and chimney-sweepers!"

The *Gospel Magazine*, under the editorship of the touchy Toplady, joined in the cry against his old adversary, and justified the brutality of the pamphlet in question by saying, "When you take Old Nick by the nose, it must be with a pair of red-hot tongs." "The truth is," says this "gospel" editor, "Mr. Whitefield was too much a Churchman for Mr. Wesley's fanaticism to digest. O ye deluded followers of this horrid man, God open your eyes, and pluck your feet out of the net, lest ye sink into the threefold ditch of antichristian error, of foul Antinomianism, and of eternal misery at last!"

Mr. Wesley replied in a manner the courtesy of which is remarkable when it is considered that his two vilifiers were then a couple of audacious young aspirants for controversial fame, while Wesley was a venerable clergyman of seventy-four years of age, a great religious leader, a man of boundless self-sacrifice, and one of the best scholars and most highly respected gentlemen of his time.

In spite of all the excitements and commotions with which England, as well as the colonies, was distracted during the years of the American war, Methodism continued to prosper. Preaching-houses were springing up all over England and Wales, and the Old Foundry in London was overwhelmed with people. The London Methodists were also now more wealthy as well as more numerous, and there was an evident occasion for a more churchly edifice in the British capital. Besides this, Mr. Wesley only held a lease of the Foundry, and at its expiration, which would now soon occur, the building was to be pulled down; he therefore started a subscription for a "New Foundry," and at three public meetings raised for that purpose the sum of a thousand pounds. In April, 1777, the corner-stone of the building

was laid, and on Sunday, November 1, 1778, it was opened for public worship. The design was to build "an elegant chapel, such as even the Lord Mayor might attend without any diminishing of his official dignity," and that it should be wholly supplied by ordained clergymen of the Established Church on Sundays, when the liturgy should be constantly read at both morning and evening service. No layman, so called—that is, no itinerant preacher not episcopally ordained—was allowed to officiate within its walls, except on weekdays. Charles Wesley, Thomas Coke, and John Richardson were to be its only sabbatic priests; Pawson, Rankin, Tennent, Olivers, and others, though better preachers than any of the trio, not being admitted, because their heads had not been "touched by a bishop's fingers."*

The result of this arrangement, however, was a great falling off in congregations, until the trustees of the chapel waited on Charles Wesley with a request that he would not preach so often at City Road Chapel, as the New Foundry was called—from the name of the street in which it stood—but would sometimes allow the lay preachers to take his place. Poor Charles reluctantly submitted, but he wrote to his brother, casting all the blame on the poor dissenters, and stating that it was wholly owing to their deep-rooted prejudices against the clergy of the Established Church that these events had transpired.

For many years the men sat on one side of the chapel and the women on the other, and although large numbers paid for seats, no one was allowed to call a seat or a pew his own.

The Conference of 1799 showed a decrease of membership in twenty of the circuits, including London. John Pawson, one of the chiefs, has left this striking record:—

"I was perhaps as well acquainted with the two brothers as any man now living. That Mr. Charles Wesley was of a very suspicious temper is certainly true; and that Mr. John Wesley had far more charity in judging of persons in general (except the rich and great) than his brother had is equally true; but that he was so apt to be taken in with appearances

* Tyerman's "Life and Times of Wesley."

is not true. He was well able to form a judgment of particular persons, and was as seldom mistaken as his brother. I once heard him pleasantly say, 'My brother suspects everybody, and he is continually imposed upon; but I suspect nobody, and I am never imposed upon.' It is well known that Mr. Charles Wesley was much prejudiced in favour of the clergy through the whole course of his life, and that it was nothing but hard necessity that obliged him in any degree to continue the lay preachers. He must have been blind indeed not to have seen that God had given to many of them, at least, very considerable ministerial gifts, and that He attended their labours with great success; but I am well persuaded that, could he have found a sufficient number of clergymen to have carried on the work of God, he would soon have disowned all the lay preachers.

"Mr. Charles was inclined to find out and magnify any supposed fault in the lay preachers; but his brother treated them with respect, and exercised a fatherly care over them. I am persuaded that, from the creation of the world, there never existed a body of men who looked up to any single person with a more profound degree of reverence than the preachers did to Mr. Wesley; and I am bold to say that never did any man, no, not St. Paul himself, possess so high a degree of power over so large a body of men as was possessed by him. He used his power, however, for the edification of the people, and abused it as little, perhaps, as any one man ever did. When any difficulty occurred in governing the preachers, it soon vanished. The oldest, the very best, and those of them that had the greatest influence, were ever ready to unite with him, and to assist him to the utmost of their power. The truth is, if the preachers were in any danger at all, it was of calling Mr. Wesley 'Rabbi,' and implicitly obeying him in whatsoever he thought proper to command."

It is evident from the attacks upon him, as well as from the growth of his societies, that John Wesley was now become one of the most honoured, as well as influential, men in the three kingdoms. Methodism was an established fact—a leading feature in the religious life of Great Britain; and the furious opposition which it at first encountered, not only

from the rabble, but also from certain of the magistrates and clergy, had given place to toleration and respect.

In 1784, there were no less than three hundred and fifty-nine Methodist chapels in England, Ireland, and Scotland, besides unnumbered regular preaching places of a humbler style. There were Methodist local preachers in large numbers both in the army and navy; and the hymns of Charles Wesley were sung with heartiness and pathos at many a class-meeting in His Majesty's barracks, and between the decks of His Majesty's men of war.

Success always carries with it a certain dignity which commands respect, and when that success is in the highest possible line of effort, namely, the preaching of the Gospel for the salvation of souls, it carries with it also the presumption that he who achieves it is favoured in heaven as well as honoured among men. No Englishman had ever received such tokens of the Divine favour as those which on all hands surrounded this chief Methodist, and it was now quite safe, and even popular, to profess a high opinion both of the man and his work.

There were even a few of the clergy of the Establishment who claimed friendship with him, though they would not have carried that friendship so far as to invite him into their pulpits. Even the saintly Fletcher of Madeley, though he opened his heart to Wesley, was somewhat trammelled by his churchly relations, and could not at all times meet him as a clergyman on equal terms. But that was a trifling matter to a man who had hundreds of pulpits of his own; that is to say, as much his own as the pulpits of his clerical friends were their own.

Besides this faithful friend and brave defender, Wesley had a few loving brethren scattered in parish churches over the kingdom, or doing the work of evangelists after a fashion of their own. Among these was his old friend and counsellor, Vincent Perronet, vicar of Shoreham; Henry Venn, curate of Clapham; Martin Madan, the brilliant evangelist; the wealthy and generous Berridge, vicar of Everton; the scholarly and zealous Romaine, one of Lady Huntingdon's chaplains, and afterward rector of St. Andrew's in London; and Grimshaw of Haworth, whose name appears several

times in the records of Mr. Wesley's conferences. These men, with perhaps a few others, had the sagacity to perceive and the piety to confess that John Wesley was not a worse but a better son of the Church for being also a Methodist; and well would it have been for all concerned, if this view of the case could have prevailed in all the circles of churchly power.

The close of the War of the Revolution, resulting in the independence of the American colonies, rendered some action necessary on Mr. Wesley's part to save the Methodist Societies in America from losing their connectional character. His ordination of Thomas Coke as "Superintendent of the Methodist Societies in America," being a vital portion of the history of the Methodist Episcopal Church, an account thereof will be given in another part of this volume. It was an act by which Wesley placed himself officially at the head of the Methodist body of which he was the actual head before, and one for which he has been both honoured and condemned.

Having now taken the momentous first step, the second was comparatively easy, and in July, 1785, he "set apart three well-tried preachers"—John Pawson, Thomas Hanby, and Joseph Taylor, to minister in Scotland. The remainder of Wesley's ordinations Mr. Tyerman dismisses in a single paragraph, as follows:—

"A year afterward, at the Conference of 1786, he ordained Joshua Keighley and Charles Atmore for Scotland; William Warrener for Antigua; and William Hammet for Newfoundland. A year later five others were ordained; in 1778, when Wesley was in Scotland, John Barber and Joseph Cownley received ordination at his hands; and at the ensuing Conference seven others, including Alexander Mather, who was ordained not only to the office of deacon and elder, but also to that of "superintendent." On Ash Wednesday in 1789 Wesley ordained Henry Moore and Thomas Rankin; and this, we believe, completes the list of those upon whom Mr. Wesley laid his hands. All those ordinations were in private, and some of them at four o'clock in the morning. Some of the chosen ones were intended for Scotland, some for foreign missions, while Mather, Moore.

and Rankin were employed in England. In most instances, probably in all, they were ordained deacons on one day, and on the day following received the ordination of elders, Wesley giving to each letters testimonial."

But what was that office of "Superintendent" to which Mather was ordained by Mr. Wesley? On this point there seems to be need of a little more light. Did the apostolic leader of the Methodists intend to leave a system of Wesleyan orders for the people over whom God had made him a true bishop? alas then that such a glorious order should have been ignored, such a power and dignity thrown away by his own people, in his own country, leaving to the Church in another land the sole honour of a Wesleyan apostolic episcopal succession.

It is a significant fact, that although Wesley was blamed by certain clerical authorities for taking upon himself to perform the functions which, by common consent, were the exclusive prerogative of bishops, yet, upon his public statement of his traditional as well as providential right, as a presbyter of the Church of England and the head of "the people called Methodists," to ordain a ministry for them, no one ventured to summon him before an ecclesiastical court, to be tried for breach of Church discipline; which is strong presumption that on a careful review of his conduct, and of the arguments with which he defended it, the Church authorities were convinced that Wesley was right. Whatever their private conclusions may have been, the plain and simple fact remains, that no official notice was taken of Wesley's acts of ordination, and from first to last he remained an unchallenged member of the English Church.

Another great event in this eventful decade (1775-85) was the legal establishment of the Methodist Conference by Mr. Wesley's famous "Deed of Declaration."

At the time of the Leeds Conference, in 1784, there were three hundred and fifty-nine Methodist chapels in Great Britain, the most of which, if not all, were held by trustees under the provisions of the "Deed of Settlement" drawn up by Mr. Wesley, which provided that these premises should always be held for the free use of Mr. Wesley and the preachers whom he should from time to time appoint to

preach in them. In the event of his death, this right was secured to his brother Charles, and then to the Rev. William Grimshaw, provided he outlived Charles Wesley, and after the death of these three persons the chapels were to be held in trust for the use of such ministers as might be appointed at the "yearly Conference of the people called Methodists," provided they preached no other doctrines than those contained in Wesley's Notes on the New Testament and his four volumes of sermons. "The yearly Conference of the people called Methodists" was a phrase which needed a legal definition, and it was to furnish such definition that, on the 28th of February, 1714, Mr. Wesley executed the famous "Deed of Declaration," which, a few days after, was enrolled at the High Court of Chancery, and thenceforth became the legal charter or constitution of the Wesleyan Methodist Societies.

The selection of a hundred preachers out of a body of one hundred and ninety-two to compose a legal Conference, which should be the ultimate authority among "the people called Methodists," was the most arbitrary act which this grand old autocrat ever performed. Herein he exercised his episcopal authority to the utmost, for he never did, and probably never could, give any other reason for the selection than his own good-will and pleasure. Some new men were admitted, and some old preachers were rejected, and in several instances of two men of equal rank and standing on the same circuit, one was taken and the other left.

"In nominating these preachers," says Mr. Wesley, in his history and defence of this notable document, "as I had no advisers, so I had no respect of persons; but I simply set down those that, according to my best judgment, were the most proper. This was the rise and this the nature of that famous 'Deed of Declaration,' that vile, wicked deed, concerning which you have heard such an outcry. And now, can any one tell me how to mend it, or how it could have been made better? 'Oh, yes. You might have inserted two hundred as well as one hundred preachers.' No; for then the expenses of meeting would have been double, and all the circuits would have been without preachers. 'But you might have named other preachers instead of these.' True,

if I had thought as well of them as they did of themselves. But I did not; therefore I could not do otherwise than I did without sinning against God and my own conscience.

"You see, then, in all the pains I have taken about this absolutely necessary deed, I have been labouring, not for myself, (I have no interest therein,) but for the whole body of Methodists, in order to fix them upon such a foundation as is likely to stand as long as the sun and moon endure; that is, if they continue to walk by faith, and to show forth their faith by their works; otherwise, I pray God to root out the memorial of them from the earth."

After a storm of criticism, and some few threats of rebellion, the Conference ratified the "Deed of Declaration," and "The Legal Hundred" became an order of nobility among the Methodist preachers, an aristocracy, that is to say, a government by the best. Since that day more liberal methods of management have been devised, ministers not members of this body, and laymen also, having been admitted to a place in Methodist councils; but from first to last it has been notably difficult, if not impossible, for a man without pre-eminent ability and well-trying character and honour to become a member of this honourable body, and, tested by its working and its results for nearly a hundred years, this constitution of British Methodism has proved itself to be every way worthy of the great mind that devised it.

In a letter addressed to Joseph Bradford, who was his travelling companion during the last years of his life, Mr. Wesley addresses these words to the Conference, which were to be read to them after his death:—

"MY DEAR BRETHREN,—Some of our travelling preachers have expressed a fear that, after my decease, you will exclude them, either from preaching in connection with you, or from some other privileges which they now enjoy. I know no other way to prevent any such inconvenience than to leave these my last words with you.

"I beseech you, by the mercies of God, that you never avail yourselves of the Deed of Declaration to assume any superiority over your brethren; but let all things go on among those itinerants who choose to remain together,

exactly in the same manner as when I was with you, so far as circumstances will permit.”

He also charges them to “have no respect of persons in stationing the preachers,” in choosing children for the Kingswood School, or in the distribution of Conference funds, but to do all things, as he himself had done, with a single eye to the glory of God and the good of all concerned.

CHAPTER XI.

A WORTHY CLIMAX TO A GLORIOUS CAREER.

ON the 16th of June, 1785, Mr. Wesley, now an old man of eighty-two, wrote from Dublin to one of his friends, as follows:—

"Many years ago I was saying, 'I cannot imagine how Mr. Whitefield can keep his soul alive, as he is not now going through honour and dishonour, evil report and good report; having nothing but honour and good report attending him wherever he goes.' It is now my own case; I am just in the condition now that he was then in. I am become, I know not how, an honourable man. The scandal of the cross is ceased; and all the kingdom, rich and poor, Papists and Protestants, behave with courtesy, nay, with seeming good-will! It seems as if I had well-nigh finished my course, and our Lord was giving me an honourable discharge."

During this year Wesley lost by death two of the most intimate and valued friends of his whole lifetime—Vincent Perronet and John Fletcher; the latter at fifty-six years of age, and the former at ninety-two. His brother Charles was now a feeble, broken-down old man; but John Wesley, with a vigour which he believed to be supernatural, an immediate and special gift from God, was ranging through England, Scotland, and Ireland with the spirit of a hardy young soldier or sailor, enduring hardships and discomforts with cheerfulness, absolutely unconscious of danger, and almost insensible to fatigue, preaching incessantly in chapels, court-houses, dance halls, barns, factories, and not unfrequently in the open air.

The following sketch of his personal appearance in his old age was given by John Jackson, Esq., R.A., an eminent London artist:—

"The figure of Mr. Wesley was remarkable. His stature

was low, his habit of body in every period of life the reverse of corpulent, and expressive of strict temperance and continual exercise. Notwithstanding his small size, his step was firm, and his appearance, till within a few years of his death, vigorous and muscular. His face for an old man was one of the finest we have seen. A clear, smooth forehead, an aquiline nose, an eye the brightest and most piercing that can be conceived, and a freshness of complexion scarcely ever to be found at his years, and expressive of the most perfect health, conspired to render him a venerable and interesting figure. Few have seen him without being struck with his appearance, and many who have been greatly prejudiced against him have been known to change their opinion the moment they were introduced into his presence. In his countenance and demeanour there was a cheerfulness mingled with gravity, a sprightliness which was the natural result of an unusual flow of spirits, and yet was accompanied with every mark of the most serene tranquillity. His aspect, particularly in profile, had a strong character of acuteness and penetration. In dress he was the pattern of neatness and simplicity. A narrow plaited stock, a coat with a small upright collar, no buckles at his knees, no silk or velvet in any part of his apparel, and a head as white as snow, gave an idea of something primitive and apostolic, while an air of neatness and cleanliness was diffused over his whole person."

He was still as much of a student as ever, being now engaged upon a life of his beloved friend Fletcher, to which, he says, "I devote all the time I can spare from five in the morning till eight at night. These are my studying hours. I cannot write longer in a day without hurting my eyes." This was in September, 1786, and this student, who was writing fifteen hours a day on what proved to be his last literary work, was now eighty-three years old.

In December of the same year he writes: "Ever since that good fever which I had in the North Island, I have had, as it were, a new constitution; all my pains and aches have forsaken me, and I am a stranger to weariness of any kind. This is the Lord's doing, and it may well be marvellous in our eyes."

On the 29th of March, 1788, Charles departed this life,

in the eightieth year of his age. He died at his residence in the city of London, which he had seldom left for many years, except occasionally to attend the Methodist Conferences at Leeds.

As a writer of hymns, the most and the best that were ever breathed forth from the soul of any one man, Charles Wesley will be held in immortal honour, though it is painfully evident that in the last years of his life his mind was so disturbed by the increasing liberties taken by the Methodists with the forms and orders of the Established Church, that personally he was not so much admired as endured. Bodily infirmities also pressed upon him, and his life-long prejudices kept him in a religious fret over the damage they were receiving at the hands of his more progressive brother, who now treated him with almost fatherly tenderness, overlooking his peevishness, and healing the wounds which would otherwise have resulted therefrom.

In his early life Charles Wesley was a hero, he might have been a saint, and on more than one occasion he had a narrow escape from being a martyr. He could face a mob, and hold his ground till his clothes were torn to tatters and the blood ran down his face in streams, and yet he was a man of gentle spirit, tender sensibility, and, as he himself declares, “wanting in what is ordinarily called courage.” He was a zealot of the first order, he was also a truly converted soul, but his narrow churchmanship cast a cloud over the latter portion of his life, which even his genius and piety do not wholly dispel.

The tomb of Charles Wesley is in the churchyard of St. Marylebone, in London, where he was buried at his own request by the priest of the parish in which he lived. He was well aware that his brother intended to be buried among his own people, in the little cemetery by the City Road Chapel; but Charles would not lie beside him in death, because the place appointed was unconsecrated ground.

This piece of bigotry on the part of his younger brother gave Mr. Wesley some pain and trouble, and in answer to the gossip occasioned by the matter he published his views on the consecration of churches and burial-grounds, declaring it to be a practice which was “neither enjoined by the law of

the English State nor of the English Church, neither is it enjoined by the law of God, a thing wrong in itself, flavoured with papal superstition, and absolutely ridiculous in the eyes of sensible Protestants."

The list of poetical publications which bear the names of John and Charles Wesley is forty-nine in number, comprising books and papers, large and small. "Hymns for the Watch Night" is a little tract of twelve duodecimo pages; another of the same size is entitled "Hymns occasioned by the Earthquake, March 8, 1750, to which is added a Hymn upon the Pouring out of the Seventh Vial, Rev. xvii. etc., occasioned by the Destruction of Lisbon;" while "A Collection of Moral and Sacred Poems, from the most celebrated English Authors," published in 1844, is a work in three volumes, containing over five thousand pages, very much of which is original matter. There are on his list of poetical works, "Hymns for Times of Trouble and Persecution;" "Hymns for the Expected Invasion of 1759;" "Hymns for the Family;" "Hymns for Children;" "Hymns for the Nativity of Our Lord;" "A Hymn for the English in America;" extracts from Milton's "Paradise Lost," from Young's "Night Thoughts," and other English standard poems; besides the ten or twelve hymn-books proper; chief of which is his "Collection of Hymns for the Use of the People called Methodists," 1780, a volume of five hundred pages, which has only recently given place among the English Wesleyans to a larger and more catholic collection. Of the forty-nine publications above mentioned, only thirteen bear the name of Charles Wesley at all, and only five of these are credited to him alone; one of the five being a short poem addressed by him to his brother John.

Beyond all dispute Charles Wesley was the prince of lyric poets. He was a poet by birth, by culture, by inspiration, and by providential opportunity. Samuel Wesley, as has been seen, was much given to writing poetry, or, as he himself expressed it, "beating rhymes;" his son Charles inherited this rhyming faculty to an eminent degree, and it is understood that he produced an immense amount of work in metre which was no better than those strained and stupied couplets into which his father "beat" the Holy Scriptures. He was

continually producing hymns. If one of his children fell sick, he wrote a hymn about it, and another hymn when the child got well again. Every addition to his family stimulated his genius to the production of several hymns, a hymn to the mother, another to the child, another to the remaining members of the family, and perhaps still another to mothers and children in general.

“From the mass of Charles Wesley’s poetry,” says an eminent authority, “two hundred hymns may be selected which cannot be equalled by a like selection from the writings of any other man ;” and Dr. Isaac Watts, the only man who disputes the crown with the poet of the Methodists, is credited with the statement, extravagant as it may seem, that Charles Wesley’s hymn entitled “Wrestling Jacob” was worth all the poetry that he himself had ever written.

The best hymns of Methodism, however, are more than Wesleyan ; they are divine. That glorious wave of spiritual power and inspiration, sweeping over the land, caught up this enthusiast, this poet-preacher, into the third heaven of song, and showed him things which it is quite lawful, but also quite impossible, for ordinary men to utter. His verse owed nothing to that heathen myth, the “Muse of poetry,” and everything to the Holy Spirit, by whom the great truths of the Christian faith were made gloriously real to his soul, and without which revelation he would have been only another rhyme-beater, whose pages could only be valued by the pound. Add to his birthright and his heavenly inspiration the unequalled opportunity of making the songs of a people whose language is full of music, and who were and are the heartiest singers that Christendom ever produced, and we have the three points which determine the circle of Charles Wesley’s poetic power and fame.

In the year 1780 a young gentleman, only twenty-one years of age, of brilliant talents, and master of a handsome fortune, made his appearance in the British House of Commons, whose name was destined to take first rank among the benefactors of mankind.

From a boy the soul of William Wilberforce was moved with hatred and horror toward the traffic in human flesh, which in many of the English colonies was a source of

enormous wealth. The slave-trade was carried on in British ships, defended by British arguments, and sustained by British authority both in Church and State. Even George Whitefield, as we have seen, was the owner of a considerable number of slaves, whom he kept to work his Orphan House plantation in Georgia; and so firmly was this iniquity entrenched, that none but an enthusiast, moved by that sort of enthusiasm which is an inspiration from God, would have ventured to attempt its extirpation.

In 1787 the London Society for the Suppression of the Slave Trade was formed. Thirteen years before this, John Wesley had published his "Thoughts upon Slavery," at which time Wilberforce was a youth of fifteen.

It is a pleasant sight to see this veteran of eighty-four and this young champion of twenty-eight uniting their forces for such a glorious struggle. Wesley was not able to give his personal attention to the affairs of the new society, but from time to time wrote letters which were read at their meetings, giving sagacious counsel, and pledging all possible assistance. He also printed a new edition of his "Thoughts upon Slavery," and spread it broadcast throughout England and Ireland. Thus began the struggle which was kept up for forty-six years, and which, on the 2nd of August, 1833, terminated in the Act of Emancipation, whereby Great Britain wiped out that blot upon her national character, at a cost to the national treasury of twenty million pounds sterling, and provided for the liberation of all the slaves within the limits of her realm.

The following remarkable incident is related by Mr. Wesley. It occurred during his anti-slavery sermon preached at Bristol on the 6th of March, 1788. The topic of the discourse had been previously announced, and the chapel was densely crowded, both with rich and poor.

"About the middle of the discourse," says Wesley, "while there was on every side attention still as night, a vehement noise arose—none could tell why—and shot like lightning through the congregation. The terror and confusion were inexpressible. You might have imagined it was a city taken by storm. The people rushed upon each other with the utmost violence; the benches were broken in pieces, and

nine-tenths of the congregation appeared to be struck with the same panic. In about six minutes the storm ceased almost as suddenly as it rose; and, all being calm, I went on without the least interruption. It was the strangest incident of the kind I ever remembered; and I believe none can account for it without supposing some preternatural influence. Satan fought, lest his kingdom should be delivered up. We set the next day apart as a day of fasting and prayer, that God would remember those poor outcasts of men,” [the slaves,] “and make a way for them to escape, and break their chains asunder.”

To John Wesley, “the prince of the power of the air” was a veritable person, against whom he felt it his duty to contend. He believed in the devil, and hated him, just as truly as he believed in the Lord, and loved Him; and it was no strain upon his faith to believe that himself and his work were hated and opposed by the one, and loved and assisted by the other.

Wesley died in the beginning of this great anti-slavery movement, but his name will stand in history with those of Wilberforce and Clarkson, as one of the first and chief promoters of that deliverance to the captives, which is the greatest honour and glory ever achieved by the British nation.

On the 1st of March, 1789, Mr. Wesley set out on his last journey to Ireland. The management of Methodism in that island had largely fallen into the hands of Dr. Thomas Coke, who had now become his chief assistant, and who for many years in succession had presided at the sessions of the Irish Conference; but Wesley was still held to be their father in the Gospel, and his visit on this occasion, while Dr. Coke was absent in America on his episcopal mission, was a season of great rejoicing.

The Irish Conference was now composed of sixty preachers, of whom, at the session of 1789, there were between forty and fifty present. Wesley, who had a peculiar love for Ireland, sets down in his Journal this complimentary notice:—

Friday, July 3. Our little Conference began in Dublin, and ended Tuesday, 7. On this I observe: 1. I never had between forty and fifty such preachers together in Ireland before; all of them, we had reason to hope, alive to God,

and earnestly devoted to His service. 2. I never saw such a number of preachers before so unanimous in all points, particularly as to leaving the Church, which none of them had the least thought of. It is no wonder that there has been this year so large an increase of the Society."

And again he writes: "I have found such a body of members as I hardly believed could have been found together in Ireland—men of so exact experience, so deep piety, and so strong understanding. I am convinced they are in no way inferior to the English Conference, except it be in number."

Ireland is a rainy country. Again and again the heavens poured down their showers upon the out-of-door congregations which gathered to hear the great Wesley; but they listened almost as well with the water running down their backs as if they had been under the shelter of a cathedral dome. Sometimes the preacher managed to find a covered spot; but if none were convenient, he, too, stood up under the outpouring, and preached "until he was wet to the skin, praying with a fervent heart the while, that grace might descend upon his hearers in equally copious floods."

From Dublin he made a preaching tour through the Irish provinces, in which tour of about nine weeks he preached in more than sixty different towns and villages, sometimes in churches and chapels, sometimes in the open air, and once in a place which he says was "large but not elegant—a cow-house." He gives no account of the number of members in the Irish Societies, but the minutes of the Bristol Conference of 1790 supply the following figures:—

Number of Circuits in Ireland	29
„ Preachers	67
„ Members	14,106*

On the 12th of July, 1789, Wesley bade a final adieu to Ireland. Multitudes followed him to the ship, and before going on board he gave out a hymn, which the people sang as well as they could with their hearts in their throats. After the singing, the grand old patriarch dropped upon his knees on the wharf, and commended them all to God. Then there were hand-shakings, and blessings, and loving farewells;

* Smith's "History of Methodism," vol. i., p. 603.

many weeping, and some falling on the old man's neck and kissing him. Now he steps on deck ; the lines are cast off ; the vessel catches the breath of heaven with its white wings, and the last the warm-hearted Irish Methodists ever see of their beloved father in God he is standing upon the deck, his white locks shining, his face full of fatherly tenderness, and his hand outstretched toward them in a parting benediction.

Early in the year 1790, Mr. Wesley, in spite of the increasing infirmities of age, set out to make his great northern circuit. This tour was Wesley's annual visitation of the societies in the northern part of England, and of the few that had maintained a foothold in Scotland. On this last occasion it occupied him five months. Think of a man eighty-seven years old, before the age of railways, travelling a five months' circuit through regions where the roads were often next to impassable, carrying with him "the care of all the churches," preaching from ten to fifteen times a week, and riding in his carriage forty or fifty miles a day ! But the grand old hero fairly revelled in it. He gloried in being able to endure so much hardness as a soldier of Jesus Christ.

He also kept up his field-preaching. Sometimes, even in wintry weather, and with the cold winds cutting his face and trying to shake his old bones, the voice of the venerable man would rise in all the clearness and fulness of his earlier years, as, with the round earth for a pulpit, and the sky for a sounding-board, he preached to the multitudes which crowded about him, to whom his presence was almost like that of a saint come back from glory, and whose words were all the more precious because it was evident that the man was ripe for heaven, and they would doubtless see his face no more. In the churchyard of the little town of Winchelsea stands an old ash-tree, which is known in the town and for many miles about by the name of "Wesley's tree," from the circumstance that beneath its shade that venerable man on this great circuit preached the last sermon that he ever delivered in the open air.

It was no unusual thing for him, when on these episcopal tours of visitation, to take his breakfast at three o'clock in the morning, and to enter his carriage at four. He would say to his coachman, "Have the carriage at the door at four

o'clock ; I do not mean a quarter or five minutes past, but *four* ;” and the coachman knew very well that it would not do to be a minute late. During this last pastoral visitation of his societies, Wesley preached eighty sermons in eight weeks, besides frequently celebrating the Lord’s Supper, at which he sometimes administered to from fifteen hundred to two thousand communicants.

In his journal of his last grand episcopal tour, Wesley speaks of “the unpleasing work of visiting the classes ;” and mentions the fact that the Dublin Society had increased to about eleven hundred members, of whom, after due examination, he “felt obliged to exclude about one hundred.” As the chief authority among “the people called Methodists,” Wesley held himself responsible for the correctness of the lives of the members of his societies. All that was required of any one on being admitted to this fraternity was “a desire to flee from the wrath to come, and obedience to the ‘general rules ;’” hence it frequently became necessary to correct the rolls, and to cut off therefrom the names of those who had fallen away from Methodism ; though that did not always imply falling from grace, since many persons joined the societies who did not profess to have any grace, but sought to obtain it in this particular manner.

Wesley’s method was to meet the classes, and by personal inquiry find out how the souls of his people prospered—a work which of all others he most heartily disliked ; but he would not neglect it, especially because there were increasing signs of aversion to it on the part of some of his preachers. He must needs hold a personal examination of the minds and consciences of twenty-five hundred sinners in all stages of penitence and salvation ; some ignorant and needing instruction, some stupid and unable to receive it, some stubborn and determined not to have it, some full of foolish fancies to be despoiled, some full of doubts to be cleared away, some in sorrow to be comforted, others in rebellion to be expelled ; with as many shades and variations of these general conditions as there were individuals in the Society. Such was the task which the Bishop of the Methodists speaks of as “the unpleasant work of visiting the classes.”

The forty-seventh Conference, the last one blessed by the

presence of Mr. Wesley, was opened at Bristol on the 27th of July, 1790. The unpleasing work of visiting and sifting the classes was not neglected, and after that process the Bristol Society numbered nine hundred and forty-four. The statistics of the body of Methodists both at home and abroad, which were reported at this Conference, were something amazing. Up to the year 1780 the movement had been a glorious success, but its progress during the last ten years of Wesley's life was more than double the united results of the forty years preceding.

During some portions of his life his income from his publishing house was from five hundred to a thousand pounds a year; besides which, large sums of money were placed in his hands for charitable distribution. But none of this did Mr. Wesley consider as his own; he was merely the Lord's steward in this matter, and he received his yearly allowance of thirty pounds from the hands of the treasurer of his publishing house, as if he had been any other itinerant preacher, or a teacher in the Kingswood or Newcastle schools; and he declared that, in spite of his great income, he never in all his life had at one time one hundred pounds that he could call his own.

“Poor, yet making many rich; having nothing, and yet possessing all things!”

About ten on the morning of Wednesday, March 2, 1791, after a brief season of prostration, but without any disease or pain, in the full use of his senses, and in the glorious triumph of the faith he had preached so long and so well, John Wesley passed from the world of the dying to the world of the living.

It was his earnest prayer that he might cease at once to “work and live;” and there were, indeed, only nine days from the date of his last sermon at the house of a friend near London to the time when he departed for the house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. On the day after this last discourse (February 24) he wrote his last letter, which, it is interesting to note, was to his young friend Wilberforce, cheering him on in his struggle against slavery.

The next day he returned to his residence in City Road, London, and on reaching home he went immediately to his

room, and desired to be left alone for a short time. At the end of the time appointed he was found to be ill, and his physician, Dr. Whitehead, was summoned at once.

“They are more afraid than hurt,” said he to the doctor on his arrival.

But presently he fell into a drowsy condition, in which he passed the next thirty-six hours. On Sunday morning, February 27th, he seemed to be rallying again, got up and sat in his chair, looking cheerful, repeated portions of hymns, and joined in conversation; but soon he began to wander in his mind, and imagined himself to be meeting the classes or preaching. His friends now became alarmed, and being utterly without hope except from on high, notes were hastily dispatched to the preachers by his faithful friend and travelling companion, Joseph Bradford, in these words:—

“Mr. Wesley is very ill. Pray! Pray! Pray!”

On Tuesday, March 1, after a restless night, being asked if he suffered pain, he answered “No;” and then began singing:—

“All glory to God in the sky,
And peace upon earth be restored!
O Jesus, exalted on high,
Appear our omnipotent Lord.
Who meanly in Bethlehem born,
Didst stoop to redeem a lost race;
Once more to Thy people return,
And reign in Thy kingdom of grace.”

After some time he said, “I will get up;” and while his friends were arranging his clothes, he began again to sing:—

“I’ll praise my Maker while I’ve breath,
And when my voice is lost in death,
Praise shall employ my nobler powers;
My days of praise shall ne’er be past
While life, and thought, and being last,
Or immortality endures.”

Being exceedingly weak, he was presently carried back to his bed, and after arranging some trifling matters, and giving a few brief directions about his burial, which he desired to be conducted in the simplest manner, he called out, “Pray and praise;” and while his friends fell upon their knees, he

ferverently responded to the prayers they offered; especially to that of his friend John Broadbent, who desired that God would still bless the system of doctrine and discipline which Wesley had been the means of establishing.

On rising from prayer, his friends drew near to his bed, and with the utmost calmness he saluted each one present, shook hands, and said, “Farewell, farewell!” Some time after this he tried again to speak, but his words were too feeble to be understood. Observing the anxiety on the faces of his friends at being unable to understand him, the dying man summoned all his remaining strength, and exclaimed in a clear, strong voice, “The best of all is, God is with us!” Then, after a short space, lifting his hand, he emphatically repeated, “*The best of all is, God is with us!*”

A little before ten o'clock on the morning of March 2 the supreme moment arrived. Several of his relatives and members of his household knelt around his bed in prayer; and on rising from their knees, and seeing that Wesley was about to depart, Bradford solemnly repeated these words:—

“Lift up your heads, O ye gates; and be ye lifted up, ye everlasting doors, and this heir of glory shall come in.” And while he was yet speaking, without a sign or a groan, this great man, full of years and honours, passed away; doubtless to hear the words from the lips of his Lord, which, according to human judgment, might be better spoken to him than to almost any other man, “Well done, good and faithful servant, enter thou into the joy of thy Lord.”

The funeral was celebrated in City Road Chapel on the 9th of March, at five o'clock in the morning. There were two good reasons for the choice of this unusual hour. First, it was Wesley's favourite time of preaching; and second, at a later hour of the day the attending crowds would be overwhelming and dangerous.

The beautiful burial service of the Church of England was read by the Rev. Mr. Richardson, who had served him as a faithful son in the ministry for thirty years, and who now lies close by his side.

When the minister came to that part of the service, “Forasmuch as it hath pleased Almighty God to take unto Himself the soul of our dear brother,” instead of “brother” he

used "father," with an emphasis so suggestive, and a voice so full of love and tenderness, that the whole assembly broke out in uncontrollable sobs and tears.

A simple monument marks his grave in City Road cemetery, in which it was his desire that his dust might repose among the graves of his people. This burial-ground has now been closed. For a long time it was held as a sacred and honourable spot, in which only the chief men of "the people called Methodists" could hope to find a resting-place by the side of their great leader; and after the burial there of that honoured father in Israel, the Rev. Jabez Bunting, the number of this elect was declared complete, and the place was once for all given over to memory and to history.

A short time before his death Mr. Wesley executed a deed in which he gave his public interests over into the hands of trustees, chief of whom was Dr. Thomas Coke, to be by them managed for the benefit of the Methodist Connection.

His manuscripts he gave to Dr. Thomas Coke, Dr. Whitehead, and Henry Moore, "to be burned or published, as they see good." He also directed the sum of six pounds to be given to six poor men who might carry his body to the grave, particularly desiring that there should be no pomp or show on this occasion, and solemnly adjuring his executors in the name of God to see this desire carried out; and, finally, he directed that, six months after his death, eight volumes of sermons from his publishing house should be given to each of his travelling preachers who should then be members of the Methodist Connection.

CHAPTER XII.

IN MEMORIAM.

“ONE hundred and thirty years ago Wesley was shut out of every church in England; now marble medallion profiles of himself and his brother, accompanied with suitable inscriptions, are deemed deserving of a niche in England’s grandest cathedral. The man who a century since was the best abused man in the British Isles, is now hardly ever mentioned but with affectionate respect.” *

It is but just and consistent that some memorial of that regal and apostolic man should be set up among the tombs of England’s princes, bishops, heroes, and statesmen. Other men have been kings by the accident of birth; John Wesley reigned by virtue of the divine anointing. Other bishops have worn the mitre and carried the keys through the devious workings of State-church preferment; John Wesley was a bishop by the grace of God. Other heroes have earned their honours by ravaging sea and land to kill, burn, and destroy; Wesley, with equal courage and equal skill, achieved his fame, not by killing, but by saving men. Macaulay, in his estimate of John Wesley, says, “His genius for government was not inferior to that of Richelieu;” and Southey, in a letter to Wilberforce, writes, “I consider Wesley as the most influential mind of the last century—the man who will have produced the greatest effects centuries, or perhaps millenniums, hence, if the present race of men should continue so long.”

And if poets are to be honoured in this splendid mausoleum, who better deserves a place therein than Charles Wesley? His songs have helped more souls to happiness and holiness

* Tyerman’s “Life and Times of Wesley.”

and heaven than those of any other bard since the days of the Psalmist of Israel; like those sacred chants which echo through the ages, the hymns of Charles Wesley with each succeeding generation are borne on a higher, grander, sweeter tide of harmony; giving still the best expression to the prayers or joys of human souls in every time of trial or triumph, from the sorrow of the broken-hearted penitent at the "mourner's bench" to the notes of victory with which the dying saint catches his first glimpse of the glory that awaits the people of the Lord.

On the evening of November 1, 1878, the Methodists of the city of New York gave a reception to the late Dean Stanley, then on his first visit to this country; which was understood to be a public and official recognition by the Methodists of America of the Christian and catholic courtesy of the distinguished guest of the occasion, who, as custodian of Westminster Abbey, had given permission to erect therein a monument to the two Wesleys. On that memorable occasion, in responding to the address of welcome, Dean Stanley gave this account of the inception of the plan, which was first proposed to him by the Rev. Drs. Jobson and Rigg, of the British Wesleyan Conference:—

"It was some eight or ten years ago that the then President of the Wesleyan Conference* asked, with that courtesy and modesty which is characteristic of him, that I would allow 'the erection of a monument in Westminster Abbey, in Poet's Corner, to Charles Wesley, as the sweet psalmist of our English Israel.'

"I ventured to answer, 'If we are to have a monument to Charles, why not to John?' To John Wesley, accordingly, together with his brother Charles—not as excluding Charles, but as the greater genius, as the greater spirit of the two—that monument has been erected. John Wesley's monument, with the likeness also of his brother Charles, has been erected in Westminster Abbey, close to a monument which was erected in the last century; and I mention it only as showing that in welcoming this recognition of your illustrious founder I have been but following the precedents already

* Rev. Frederick I. Jobson, D.D.

established in Westminster Abbey and in the Church of England. The monument to John Wesley was erected side by side with the monument which in the last century was erected to the memory of the great Congregational divine and poet, Isaac Watts. It has been said in the address, and I think it has been said also by the other speakers, that we are assembled here in a building consecrated to the Methodist worship—consecrated to the worship of Almighty God, as set on foot in this country by John Wesley. It reminds me of what happened to myself when, on visiting in London the City Road Chapel, in which John Wesley ministered, and in the cemetery adjoining, in which he is buried, I asked an old man who showed me the cemetery—I asked him perhaps inadvertently, and as an English Churchman might naturally ask—

“By whom was this cemetery consecrated?”

“And he answered, ‘It was consecrated by the bones of that holy man, that holy servant of God, John Wesley.’”

“In the spirit of that remark I return to the point to which I have ventured to address my remarks, and that is, The claims which the character and career of John Wesley have, not only upon your veneration, but upon the veneration of English Christendom.

“And, first of all, may I venture to say that in claiming him as your founder you enjoy a peculiar privilege among the various communions which have from time to time broken off, or at least varied, from the communion of the Church of England. The founder of the English Baptists is comparatively unknown; the founder of the English Congregationalists (and I say it with no shadow of disrespect) is also comparatively unknown; the founder of English Unitarianism (and I say it also without a shadow of disrespect) is also comparatively obscure; the founder of the Society of Friends, George Fox, has been superseded in celebrity by William Penn, and by other illustrious Friends who have risen in that Society since his departure; but it is no disrespect to the great Society of Methodists, it is no disrespect to the eminent and revered persons who sit around me, to say that no one has risen in the Methodist Society equal to their founder, John Wesley. It is this

which makes his character and which makes his fortunes so profoundly interesting to the whole Christian world.

“Again, there is this very interesting peculiarity of John Wesley—interesting not only to Wesleyans, but to the members of every communion throughout the world—he showed how it was possible to make a very wide divergence from the communion to which he belonged without parting from it. ‘I will vary,’ he used to say, ‘from the Church of England, but I will never leave it.’ And this assurance of his determination to continue in the Church of England, in spite of all difficulties and all obstacles, he persevered in to the end. I will not now—it would be most unfitting and unbecoming in me—cast any censure on the course which this great Society, especially in America, has taken since his death. Circumstances change. Opportunities are altered. Things which might have been possible in his lifetime may have become impossible since ; but, nevertheless, the relations which he himself maintained toward the Church of England are encouragements to every one, in whatever communion, to endeavour to make the best of that communion so long as he can possibly remain within it.

“And of these relations, which he encouraged his followers to maintain, of friendliness and communion with the Church of England, I need not repeat his oft-reiterated phrase. These expressions, these entreaties which he urged upon his followers not to part from the mother Church, are not the less interesting nor the less applicable because, as I have said, circumstances both in England and in America have in some degree parted us asunder. There are those in our own country—there are possibly those in America—who think that the Wesleyans, the Methodists, may possibly be one of the links of union between the mother Church of England and those who are more or less estranged from it. On this I pronounce no opinion. I know that separations once made are very difficult to be reconciled. Like the two friends described by the English poet—

‘They stand aloof, the scars remaining,
Like cliffs that have been rent asunder.’

But still we may always trust that something of the old feeling will remain. One cannot help feeling that this very

occasion shows that there is something in the hearts of Methodists which responds to the feeling which the mother Church still entertains toward them.

"I always feel that some injustice has been done, in common parlance, both in our Church and in the outlying communions; that some injustice has been done to the bishops and the authorities of our Church at the time of John Wesley's career. It was not, as has been often said, from the action of the English bishops that John Wesley or his followers were thrown into a state of estrangement. Nothing could have been more friendly, more kindly, and more generous, on the whole, than the conduct of such prelates as Archbishop Potter, as Bishop Lowth, as Bishop Benson; and nothing could have been more friendly than the conduct of our King, George III., or of the judges of England, toward John Wesley and his followers.

"The cause of their estrangement, the cause of the difficulties they encountered, arose very much more from that stupid, vulgar, illiterate prejudice which exists among the professional fanaticism and exclusiveness—that barbarous ignorance—which is found in the mobs of all countries. The feeling which drove the followers of John Wesley from their place in the Church of England was the same which, a few years later, drove the philosopher Priestley from his habitation in Birmingham to take refuge in Pennsylvania; and therefore, I repeat, the feeling between the Church of England and the Methodists need never be broken. You may remain apart from us, and we may remain apart from you; but we shall always feel that there is an under-current of sympathy on which we can always rely, and possibly, in times far distant, may perhaps once more bring us together."

Bishop Simpson, in his admirable response to the address of Dean Stanley, reasserted the claim of the Methodist Episcopal Church as the true, historic form of Wesleyanism. In the course of his remarks the Bishop said:—

"And now we congratulate you on your visit to this land, and we trust that this visit will be productive, not only of happiness to yourself, but, on your return, of increasing the friendship and union between the churches of England and America. As Methodists, as has been already said, we have

taken special interest in this welcome because of your connection with the honour paid to the memory of John and Charles Wesley. From your lips we have heard how their monument was designed and erected, and we have listened to your estimate of the character of our illustrious founder. The great outlines of this movement, which we in part represent here this evening, were marked out by him. Near the close of his long life he advised the formation of a church according to the order which we now have ; and there is no other organization or communion on earth which so clearly and distinctly represents the mind of John Wesley as the organization of the Methodist Episcopal Church. He planned its order, and we simply followed his advice."

"I was wandering through Westminster Abbey one day," continued the Bishop, "and I came to the slab that bears the name of Livingstone, with this inscription, 'And other sheep I have which are not of this fold: them also I must bring.' I admired the beauty of the selection, and I said, 'That may refer not only to the wandering sheep in Africa, but it may also refer to the fact that Livingstone did not belong to the National Church, and yet he was an honoured Christian as well as an honoured explorer.' Then I said to myself, 'Is it not a law of the human frame, that the more freely the blood passes out to the extremity, the firmer, the stronger, and the more warmly does the heart beat?' And then I asked myself, 'Was it not through Africa that Livingstone reached Westminster Abbey? was it not because the blood of the Christian heart had flown to the extremity, and come back to make England's heart grow warmer?' Then I said again, 'Was it not because John Wesley said, The world is my parish, that made it possible for you to open the doors of that grand old abbey and admit John Wesley's monument there?' His dust rests with you in England, his spirit walks our land!"

Well did Dean Stanley say, "No one has risen in the Methodist Society equal to their founder, John Wesley." With equal truth he might have said, No one has risen in England, either before or since his day, equal to John Wesley, the restorer of apostolic order, the defender of apostolic doctrine, and the pattern of apostolic life.

“The reason why God does not give you power,” said Mr. Moody, at one of his great conventions of Christian workers, “is, that He cannot trust you with it.”

Wesley was a man who could be trusted with power. He who with an income of a thousand pounds a year could limit himself to thirty pounds, and give the rest to the poor, and to help on the work of God, could safely be trusted with money; he who with the most varied scholarship of any clergyman of his time could habitually choose the simplest and plainest forms of speech, and never, even in the presence of dukes or doctors, make use of the Gospel to exhibit his learning—such a man could be trusted with the gift of tongues; he who held his strength as of no other use than to be spent in the Lord’s service, could be trusted with length of days; and he who asked no earthly honour for himself was just the man whom Jesus Christ could make a bishop of His Church, and endow with a double portion of authority and grace.

From this it must not be inferred that Wesley was rude in speech or indifferent to the graces of refined society. “Be courteous,” says the Scripture, and this precept he obeyed both from the instincts of a gentleman and the piety of a Christian. His pulpit manners were graceful and easy, his voice clear and full of calm authority. His style was often argumentative, but it was the style of expostulation rather than of debate. He did not stoop to the tricks of declamation or the arts of mere rhetoric; he did nothing “for effect,” in the surface sense of that word, and for that very reason he was the most effective preacher in Great Britain. He was scholarly without being pedantic; careful and exact in his statements; and, though wanting the fire and fancy of Whitefield, he was vastly his superior as a preacher when judged by the depth and permanence of the impressions he produced.

It has been said that Wesley “had a genius for godliness.” If by that general phrase is meant a divine endowment for seeing and doing everything in the light of its relations to God and eternity, nothing can more aptly describe the man. This is the key to all his wonderful successes: it was his “godliness” that made him at all points the superior of all other men of his time.

It was the constant care of this scholarly man, not only that his people should be more pious, but "more knowing." With this end in view, and without a thought of making money by making books, he wrote and published a series of volumes and tracts covering the whole field of useful learning. The chief department of knowledge he understood to be the knowledge of God, though in this view of the case he was somewhat singular among the clergy of his day. At Oxford he was a master in Greek, and so familiar was he with the Greek Testament, that when his memory failed to recall the exact form of a text in English, he could readily quote it in the Greek original.

"It has been loudly affirmed," says Wesley, "that most of those persons now in connection with *me*, who believe it their duty to call sinners to repentance, having been taken immediately from low trades, tailors, shoemakers, and the like, are a set of poor stupid, illiterate men, that scarce know their right hand from their left; yet I cannot but say that I would sooner cut off my right hand than suffer one of them to speak a word in any of our chapels, if I had not reasonable proof that he had more knowledge in the Holy Scriptures, more knowledge of himself, more knowledge of God and of the things of God, than nine in ten of the clergymen I have conversed with, either at all the universities or elsewhere."

In Hebrew and Latin Wesley was learned, as also in French, Italian, German, and Spanish, which last three languages he studied during his mission to Georgia. His aptitude in linguistic studies appears from the fact that, having found a half-dozen Spanish Jews among his Savannah parishioners he mastered their language in a few weeks in order to converse with them concerning the things of the kingdom of God; while among his voluminous works were grammars of the English, Latin, Greek, Hebrew, and French languages, for the use of his Kingswood School. A number of translations from the French are among his published works, and of his translations of hymns from the German, of which there are about forty in the Methodist collection, Bishop Odenheimer, in his collection of "Songs of the Spirit," pronounces this most complimentary judgment:—

"John Wesley, 1739-40, rendered or paraphrased some forty German hymns. His work is a unique phenomenon which no successors have equalled or are likely to equal."

The list of Wesley's works includes, besides his original writings, no less than one hundred and eighteen revisions and abridgments from various authors, including theology, history, biography, poetry, politics, natural philosophy, and medicine. He was an omnivorous reader, and turned his reading to good account by reproducing its best results and discoveries in cheap abridgments for the use of his people. His Christian Library, in fifty volumes, 12mo., was a collection of "the choicest pieces of practical divinity which have been published in the English tongue," involving an immense amount of research. He also edited and published voluminous works on History, Natural Science, and Poetry.

Mr. Wesley's method in theology is worthy the profoundest study and the most universal adoption. The man who sets out to establish a system of theology is exposed to the same sort of temptations as were some of the early geographers in their first attempts to construct a terrestrial globe.

There were a good many features of the earth's surface whose shape and place they knew quite well; these they set down first. Next they turned their attention to a confused mass of world-making materials, of whose position, size, and structure they were only partially informed, which they proceeded to locate and describe approximately, while waiting for further measurements and discoveries.

Having now utterly exhausted their small stock of geographical knowledge, they must have been amazed, perhaps alarmed, to see how large a portion of the surface of their globe was still an absolute blank. But it would not look well to leave it so; such a confession of ignorance would discredit their entire production; therefore they fell to work creating a globe, that is, making one out of nothing. From their plentiful lack of knowledge they threw up a mountain here, scooped out a lake there, traced a river yonder; they sprinkled vast territories with sand, and called them deserts, they dotted the seas with islands, drew with unsteady hand the shore line of a possible ocean on the north, and a possible

continent on the south ; and, having filled up the space as far as possible with names of objects known and unknown, they produced a very pretty world indeed ; having, however, this one defect, namely, it was not very much like God's world.

Much in this way wrought Augustine, Calvin, and the rest of the great doctors of inferential theology ; which serves to account for the wide difference, at many points, between their teachings and those of the word of God. But so did not John Wesley. He felt no responsibility for the plan of salvation other than to preach it with all his might. The divine "decrees" were none of his business ; the "secret will of God" did not challenge his curiosity ; it was no part of his mission to construct a full-orbed system of religious logic, but only to explore and illustrate God's world of revelation : therefore he taught what was plain, searched out what was only hidden to be searched for, and when he came to the end of the Scripture teaching, instead of travelling blindly on by means of inferences and analogies, he stopped at the shore of the infinite, and wrote upon its sands that honest word—Unknown.

Wesley's method in theology was the biblical method, as opposed to the systematic method. In his day the Holy Scriptures were "a dark continent," even to most of the clergy, which Wesley felt it his first great duty to explore. In the preface to a volume of his sermons, he says :—

"I want to know one thing, the way to heaven. God Himself has condescended to teach the way ; for this very end He came from heaven.

"He hath written it down in a book !

"O give me that book !

"At any price, give me the book of God !

"I have it : here is knowledge enough for me. Let me be a man of one book."

Here was a man—may his tribe increase !—who had the courage of faith. He professed to believe that what the Bible says God says : therefore he accepted it as it stands, as well as all the consequences it carries, without trying to warp it into conformity with any human opinion. Well was it said of John Wesley, "He had a genius for godliness."

With equal truth it may be said, he had a genius for faith.

By means of his absolute faith in God he allied himself to God, and thus became a co-worker with God. He saw that the results which the Gospel was intended to reach were supernatural; hence, with a logic as simple as it was sublime, he reached the conclusion that supernatural power must accompany the preaching of the Gospel. On looking into the word of God he saw this power at work in the ministry of the apostles. The Scripture called this power the Holy Ghost, and promised His influence to accompany the Gospel. He was a preacher of the Gospel; why, then, should not this divine power accompany his word? For this his whole soul went out in prayer. At length his faith caught hold of the promise; he felt himself in alliance with Heaven; power began to accompany his preaching, and the mountains began to move. Amen! So let it be with us all.

PART II.
WORLD-WIDE METHODISM.

CHAPTER XII.

METHODISM TRANSPLANTED TO AMERICA.

METHODISM is divine. It sweeps in the gale, glows with the fire, and speaks with the tongues of Pentecost.

The early Methodists were apostolic: nothing short of the ends of the earth could stop them. They extended their lines to India and Africa on the east, and to the wilds of America on the west; not, like so many others, to gain and govern in the name of the Lord, but always to give and to save.

Puritanism, disappointed in old England, came to New England to found an empire for itself: Anglicanism, by virtue—say rather vice—of its political *status* at home, claimed supremacy in most of the southern colonies; Methodism, transplanted hither in the hearts of a few humble emigrants who never dreamed of empire, soon outgrew them both, and in a little while became the great religious power of the land; yet not as having dominion over its faith, but as a helper of its joy. Methodism never martyred a man for his opinions. It has carried no weapons other than Bibles, hymn-books, and disciplines; its only inquisitions have been lovefeasts and classes; its only camps have been camp-meetings; nevertheless, so grand has been its march, and so swift its career of victory, that certain sagacious souls have thought they saw in its doctrines the scheme of the ultimate theology, and in its order the outlines of the ultimate Church.

So wonderful is the history of this form of religious life, that he who sets out to record it finds himself both elated and confused by the mighty rush of events. Planting himself on some eminence to which his love and loyalty have

lifted him, the historian levels his glass and sweeps the horizon to search for first things. And these are some of them :—

On a little stumpy clearing in the woods of Maryland an irrepressible Irishman has built a log-cabin, in which he is preaching free grace as he experienced it in a Methodist Society across the sea. Down in a low street in the city of New York a young Irish-German Wesleyan immigrant has been pushed into a lay pastorate by a strong-souled Methodist woman. In a fort away up the Hudson River, at a place called Albany, a British redcoat has taken up the sword of the Spirit, and is proving himself a good Methodist soldier of Jesus Christ, and a rare, rousing preacher withal. And the distance from him to them is so short, and such large things have come of their small doings, that before he is aware of it these pioneers assume heroic size. He begins to see in these men who organized some little Methodist Societies like those they left in England and Ireland, and in that woman who planned a Methodist meeting-house and brought out a hidden Methodist preacher, the founders of a great spiritual empire—superior beings, before whose faith stood out in bold relief in 1766 all that belongs to American Methodism in 1880.

Here comes Jesse Lee—a man so large, that it actually takes two horses to transport him—starting off to explore the wilderness of Maine; and as the historian keeps his jocund company, and hears him preach some three or four great sermons over and over till he has come to know and love them wondrous well, is it heresy to hint that it were easier to do the work this man is doing than to build the People's Church, or face the selfsame Boston congregation with two fresh sermons a Sunday for three successive years? Can it be possible, after all he has dreamed and heard and read of the "old-fashioned Methodists," that the former days were no better than these?

While he hesitates, a few significant facts straggle into his recollection. Methodism is, as it always was, a training-school. Asbury came to be great by trying to grow as fast as his diocese; and must it not still further broaden a bishop to span the earth in his thought and his journey, and deepen him to stand where he continually feels the thrill of the life

of a great, strong, happy, aggressive Church, whose place is in the vanguard of Christendom, and whose songs already echo round the world?

There were giants, too, among the old presiding elders, with districts large enough to form whole states; but the circuits also were large in proportion, and the membership widely scattered. The chief struggle of that day was with distance. Does not the discipline hint at this when it divides the regular ministry into “travelling deacons” and “travelling elders,” as, also, when it says, “The duties of a presiding elder are to travel through his district”?

But a travelling elder might get on more easily atop of a good horse, such as the fathers used to ride, with Methodist houses miles apart, than on the pavements of a great city, with a crammed, crowded, jostling district on his hands, across which he can travel luxuriously in half a day.

Again, the broader culture of the men, the larger opportunities of the women, and the earlier conversion of the children, stand forth as prominent and encouraging facts in the recent life of the Church; and thus, in spite of poetry and tradition, the historian comes at length to doubt if the golden age of Methodism be not out of sight before him, instead of on the dim horizon behind.

Does he thus lose sight of the “heroic period”?

By no means; the heroic period has lasted until now. When it shall have ended, Methodism itself will have come to an end.

The event officially chosen from which to reckon the age of Methodism in America is the preaching of the first sermon by Philip Embury, in his own house in New York, in 1766; but there are events of no little interest that appear to have preceded this, which, if too small to form the first chapter of American Methodism, are nevertheless worthy to stand as a preface.

Neither the mission of the Wesleys nor the preaching tours of Whitefield can be regarded as the beginning of anything permanent in America. Wesley in Savannah was a grievous failure; and Whitefield formed no societies out of the fruits of his labours, but left the ingatherings of the harvest to the regular ministry. No doubt this was the only course open

to him, for if he had interfered in any way with the established order of things, even his fiery eloquence would not have saved him from the religious wrath of orthodox colonial believers.

The first Methodist immigrant who opened his commission as a local preacher in the American colonies—if the statement of Bishop Asbury, and of certain other contemporary authorities, is to be accepted—was Robert Strawbridge, a genuine Irishman, lively, improvident, full of religion, who came to America with his family about the year 1760, and settled on Sam's Creek, in the woods of Maryland.

Strawbridge was born in Dramsnagh, county of Leitrim, the south-western county of the northern province of Ulster, on the borders of that section of Ireland which is famous in Methodist history as the field traversed by Gideon Ouseley, and swept by the great revivals which followed his labours and those of his comrades in preaching, and circulating the Scriptures in the Irish language.

It was no light thing to set up for a Methodist preacher in that day and place, and young Strawbridge was forced to leave his native county and take refuge in Sligo, where the Wesleyans were numerous enough to protect themselves.

As a man of business he was not successful. His mission seemed to be that of a roving exhorter; nevertheless, he married a wife whose patience was quite as admirable as her husband's zeal, and in 1760 he set off for America, to better his unpromising fortunes. Having settled his family in a small cabin on Sam's Creek, in Frederick County, a few miles north-west from the town of Baltimore, he began the double work of farming and preaching, his own house serving as a chapel.

It appears that his preaching throve better than his farming, for he soon had organized several little societies; and, as is stated on his monument in Mount Olivet cemetery, Baltimore, "He built the Log Meeting-House in Frederick County, Maryland, 1764, the first in America." This structure at once became the centre of attraction to large numbers of people, both white and black. It was a twice-sacred spot to the Strawbridge household, because under its rude altar two of their children were buried; it was also the cathedral

church of Strawbridge's little diocese, into which he organized his societies, and over which he presided in true episcopal fashion; travelling and preaching to the neglect of his worldly affairs, and even taking it upon himself to baptize the children and celebrate the Lord's Supper; an assumption which afterward brought him into conflict with Asbury, who, fresh from the training of Mr. Wesley, regarded the celebration of sacraments as the exclusive prerogative of the regular clergy.

It was evident that the Lord was with this little church in the wilderness, in spite of its alleged irregularity, for its numbers increased in an encouraging manner, and in the log chapel on Sam's Creek as many as four or five preachers were raised up, who, under the direction of Strawbridge, travelled little circuits on the Sabbath, and worked for their daily bread on the other days of the week. If this was not Methodism, it was something very much like it; and when the regular preachers arrived from England, they found in this zealous lay minister and his band of lay helpers a very hopeful beginning for a regular Methodist circuit.

“Behold how great a matter a little fire kindleth!”

It was during the early part of the year 1766 that the people of one of the humbler quarters of the city of New York were startled by the outbreak of a new form of religion in their midst. A carpenter, by the name of Embury, who lived in a cottage in Barrack Street (now Park Place), had taken it upon himself to be a preacher, and had set up a church in his own house. The place was soon crowded with people, who were astonished at the preaching, delighted with the singing, and struck by the common-sense doctrines proclaimed by their quiet neighbour.

In addition to the preaching and praying, all of which was done with neither manuscript nor prayer-book, there were secret meetings to which only the initiated were admitted; where it was said that women often prayed, and even stood up and made speeches, just like the men.

“Who are these strange people?” was the eager inquiry.

“They call themselves Methodists.”

“Methodists! What are they?”

“Oh, they are professors of a new-fangled religion set up

by one John Wesley in England. These are some of his disciples."

"Just come over, have they?"

"No; they have lived in New York five or six years."

"How does it happen that nobody has heard of them before?"

"Well, they are a modest, quiet sort of people; came originally from some place in Germany, called the Palatinate, a little principality on the French side of the Rhine; but being of the Protestant religion, they were driven out of their own country by the Popish King Louis XIV., and scattered over Switzerland, England, and Ireland. This was somewhere about 1690. In 1710 the British Government sent out about three thousand of them to the colonies of New York, Pennsylvania, and North Carolina, and more are occasionally arriving along with the native English and Irish immigrants."

"Are these Palatines all Methodists?"

"By no means. Embury and his wife, a woman named Heck, and two or three others, are the only ones ever heard of here. About fifty families of these Palatines settled in the county of Limerick, in Ireland, some fifty years ago; fine people they were, too; some of the very best in the whole island. After a while Mr. Wesley's preachers went into those parts and converted some of them, and this little handful of Irish-German Methodists have somehow been thrown into New York."

Such was the scanty information obtainable concerning these strange people, who, instead of waiting, as ordinary colonists did, for a minister of their own faith to establish a church for them, set about establishing a church for themselves.

Whether the first male Methodist of New York was born in Ireland or in that French province of German-speaking people formerly called the Rhine Palatinate—and since included in the territory of Bavaria, which is now a part of the great German empire—is not certainly known. The date of his birth is also uncertain; it may have been in 1728 or 1730. His first schooling was in the German language, but he afterward attended an English school. He was

simply a fair specimen of the boys of the Palatine village of Ballingran or Balligarrane ; which was a charming bit of German thrift and Protestant morality in the midst of the Papist population of Limerick County. When his school days were over, he learned the carpenter's trade ; learned it thoroughly, to his praise be it spoken ; married a wife of his own people, and emigrated to New York when he was about thirty years of age.

Concerning the great event of his life, that is to say, his experience of saving grace, there is, fortunately, no uncertainty. Dr. Wakeley has produced, in Embury's own clear and beautiful hand, the following personal testimony : “ On Christmas Day, being Monday, the 25th of December, in the year 1752, the Lord shone into my soul by a glimpse of His redeeming love, being an earnest of my redemption in Jesus Christ, to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen.”

Of course this is a Methodist testimony ; it would have been difficult to find any like it which were not Methodistic at that day.

The circumstance which has become historic as the beginning of American Methodism brings out the face of a woman whose piety was of a more aggressive type, and by whose earnest appeal and energetic efforts a buried talent was brought forth, and the graces of the feeble company were strengthened, which seemed almost ready to perish.

Barbara Heck was also of the Palatine stock ; a woman of piety, persistence, and genius for affairs, in which last respect she far excelled her cousin, Philip Embury. She was the wife of Paul Heck, and the family were among the party of emigrants which sailed from the port of Limerick for New York in 1760. There were a few Methodists among them, but for the most part they belonged to the Irish Church ; a Protestant body, but one in which there was little preaching or profession of experimental religion. After their arrival in New York, with the exception of Embury and three or four others, they all finally lost their sense of the fear of God, became open worldlings, and some of them subsequently fell into still greater depths of sin.

Late in the year 1765 another vessel arrived in New York, bringing over Paul Ruckle, Luke Rose, Jacob Heck,

Peter Barkman, and Henry Williams, Palatines all; some of them relatives of Embury, while Ruckle was a brother of Barbara Heck; but it does not appear that any of them were Methodists. In one of her visits to the new-comers, Mrs. Heck found a party engaged in a game of cards. This had the effect of awakening her to a sense of the danger which threatened them in their new homes, where many old restraints were weakened, and many temptations beset them. She therefore seized the cards, threw them into the fire, and gave her friends a solemn warning against sin, and an exhortation to holiness.

She was now thoroughly aroused. If the new people were falling into careless and wicked ways, it was no more than some of the previous company of emigrants had already done; and what was to prevent them from all becoming backsliders together, unless they resumed the use of the means of grace which they used to enjoy at home? Her cousin was a licensed preacher; he must open the Bible and open his mouth. There were a few surviving Methodists within her acquaintance; these must be gathered into a society just such as they used to have in Balligarrane. With this new purpose firmly settled in her mind, she started for the house of Embury, gave him an account of what she had seen and done, and begged him to take up his cross at once, and begin to preach in his own house.

The cottage of Embury being far too small for the new uses to which it was put, a larger room was secured near by; and to pay the rent of this room, another means of grace, to wit, a collection of money, was added to those already in use. The society flourished, was of one heart and one mind, and evidently increased in favour both with God and man.

The fame of these doings spread far and wide; it reached even to Albany, where was a man who seems to have been divinely stationed there as a reinforcement to the little band in New York; awaiting only its getting into position, hoisting its colours, and opening the spiritual campaign.

In the joint English and colonial expedition in 1745, against the French stronghold of Louisburg, which commanded the main entrance to the Gulf of St. Lawrence, there was a young British captain by the name of Webb. He

was a man of some wealth, good education, and may have adopted the profession of arms for the love of adventure, or to escape a life of idleness—that bane of so many gentlemen of fortune.

It was a dark day for Captain Webb on which they stormed and carried that fort, for he lost his right eye in the battle, and it was almost a miracle that he did not lose his life. A bullet hit him in the eyebrow, and glanced into the eye, but instead of keeping straight on into the brain, it again turned downward into his mouth. When the fight was over, he heard himself pronounced a dead man; but his senses had so far returned that he was able to deny it, and after three months in hospital he again returned to duty.

His next campaign—if the somewhat conflicting reports may be harmonised—was with General Braddock, in 1755, against the French Fort Duquesne, where the smoky city of Pittsburgh now stands. Here he was one of the very few officers who survived the ambush and slaughter of that terrible battle known as “Braddock’s defeat;” but like Washington, with whom he fought that day, he could not be killed; for God had further work for him to do, though in quite a different field from that of fighting the French and Indians.

Four years afterward he scaled the heights of Abraham with General Wolfe, on which occasion he was again wounded; this time in the arm. The last of the French Canadian wars having ended with the capture of Quebec, which followed this victory, Captain Webb returned with his regiment to England, disabled for hard campaigning, though still in the prime of life.

The conversion of this man under a sermon by Mr. Wesley at Bristol, which occurred in the year 1765, was a notable event for the Methodist Society, with which he at once united.

His natural powers of oratory greatly delighted John Adams, afterward president, who declared that the old soldier was one of the most eloquent men he ever heard. Another admirer calls him “a perfect Whitefield in declamation;” and still another thus describes his power over his audiences: “They saw the warrior in his face, and heard the missionary in his voice. Under his holy eloquence they trembled, they

wept, and fell down under his mighty word." He travelled widely in his own country, preaching to great crowds, which he attracted partly by his preaching and partly by his regimentals, and he was the means of the conversion of great numbers of people.

The news of a Methodist Society in New York, and of a revival of religion crowning its efforts, straightway brought Captain Webb down from Albany to see it. His first appearance in the preaching-room in full uniform, which he wore at church as well as on any other soldierly duty, was a rather startling event to the congregation ; but their surprise soon gave place to delight when they found that he was a Methodist, and, what was more, a preacher. The captain was, as has already been seen, a great man in his way, or rather, in several ways ; and just those ways in which the little society stood most in need of help. They needed a leader ; Webb was born to command. They needed another preacher of more experience, learning, and power ; Webb was one of the best preachers then on the continent of America. They needed money wherewith to house their young society ; Webb was both rich and generous. Truly, if they had been indulged by a choice out of all the Methodist preachers in existence, except Wesley himself, it would have been a hard matter to suit themselves better than God had suited them, and that too before they had asked Him for a preacher at all.

Of course, with such a preacher came a large increase of congregation. The Methodist meeting, with its hearty fellowship, its delightful singing, and its red-coated minister, who preached with two swords lying on the desk before him—one of them the sword of the Spirit, the other the sword of a captain in his Majesty's regulars—was now one of the marvels of New York ; and to accommodate the increasing crowds a loft over a sail-maker's shop in William Street was secured. It was eighteen feet in width by sixty in length, but it would not hold half the people who came twice a week to hear the brave Captain Webb, and his faithful lieutenant, Embury. How happy they were ! How happy people always are in revivals, till somebody gets "hurt," or becomes too proud or stubborn to lose himself in the greatness of the work !

And now that "elect lady," Barbara Heck, receives what she believes to be an inspiration, in answer to her prayers on this very subject, in the form of a plan for a meeting-house. It is a large house, two stories in height, built of stone ; will cost, with the land to build it on, nearly a thousand pounds ; and where is all the money to come from ?

Embury, with his German caution and his mannish sagacity, proposed that they should lease a bit of ground for twenty-one years, and build a cheap wooden meeting-house ; but Sister Barbara had seen her church in a vision, and had heard the words, "*I, the Lord, will do it,*" and a woman of that stamp, with such a vision in her soul, knows nothing of failure or fear. Did she not project the Society out of almost nothing ? Who knows, then, but she can show them how to build a church ? Thus the scheme which looked so wild and hopeless to merely speculative eyes was, after two days of solemn prayer and fasting, deliberately adopted, and Captain Webb led the subscription list with the sum of thirty pounds, the largest amount given by any one subscriber. This was in the early part of 1768.

The subscription paper bears the names of nearly two hundred and fifty persons, including all classes, from his worship the Mayor, the aristocracy, and certain of the clergy, down to negro servants who were so poor that they had only a single word for a name.

The chapel was built of stone, faced with blue plaster. It was sixty feet in length by forty-two in breadth. Dissenters were not yet allowed to erect "regular churches" in the city ; the new building was therefore provided with a fireplace and chimney to avoid transgressing the law. There were side galleries to the building, which for a long time were accessible only by rude ladders. The seats had no backs. It was a rough, unfinished place, but it was very neat and clean, and the floor was sprinkled over with sand as white as snow. Embury, being a skilful carpenter, wrought diligently upon the structure. With his own hands he built the pulpit, and on the memorable 30th of October, 1768, mounted the desk he had made, and dedicated the humble temple by a sermon on Hosea x. 12 : "Sow to yourselves in righteousness, reap in mercy ; break up your fallow ground ; for it is time to

seek the Lord, till He come and rain righteousness upon you."

The house was soon thronged. Within two years from its consecration, the building, and the yard in front of it, had a congregation of nearly a thousand people. It was called Wesley Chapel; the first in the world that ever bore that name.

Having now a work on his hands which was increasing and spreading with great rapidity, Captain Webb appealed to his British brethren for money, and to Mr. Wesley for preachers to help in carrying it on. Not satisfied with this, and having American Methodism so much at heart, he went to England in 1772 in its interest; preached in London, Dublin, and elsewhere; made a stirring appeal for recruits for America in the Leeds Conference, and in 1773 brought back with him Messrs. Rankin and Shadford; Messrs. Pilmoor and Boardman having already been sent out in response to his and other appeals. He continued his evangelistic labours with unabated zeal till after the breaking out of the War of the Revolution, being one of the last of the English preachers to leave; but finally the country became too hot for him, and he bade a reluctant good-bye to America, the scene of so many struggles and victories in his varied and eventful life.

On his return to England he secured a home for his family in Portland, on the heights of Bristol, but still travelled and preached extensively in chapels, in market-places, and in the open air, attended by immense congregations. Having escaped so many dangers and deaths, he believed to the end of his days that a ministering spirit, a guardian angel, had through divine mercy attended him all the way in his diversified pilgrimage. From the year 1776 to 1782, a time of war by land and sea, he annually made a summer's visit to the French prisoners at Winchester, addressing them in their own language, which he had studied while in Canada. When he preached at Portsmouth, crowds of soldiers and sailors listened to him with all possible veneration, and in Bristol and the neighbouring country much spiritual good was effected.

On the 21st of December, 1796, Captain Webb suddenly entered into the joy of his Lord.

The venerable soldier and evangelist was laid to rest in a vault made for him under the communion table at Portland Chapel; and the trustees erected a marble monument to his memory within its walls; the inscription whereon pronounced him “Brave, active, courageous—faithful, zealous, successful—the principal instrument in erecting this chapel.” His name must be for ever illustrious in our ecclesiastical history, as, aside from the mere question of priority, he must be considered the principal founder of the Methodist Church in America.

In 1768, Captain Webb extended his evangelistic labours to the city of Philadelphia. The way had been opened for him by the good words of a Rev. Mr. Wrangle, a Swedish missionary, who had visited the city, and whose favourable impressions of Methodism, from reading Mr. Wesley’s writings, induced him to advise his friends to receive the Methodist preachers, who, from their well-known enterprising spirit, he was sure could not be long in making their appearance. A class of seven members was organized, and the Methodist head-quarters was established in a sail-loft in Front Street, near Dock Creek. This new appointment, also, the missionary captain added to his already wide preaching circuit, and the little vine grew and flourished under the sunshine of God’s favour and the dews of His grace.

St. George’s Church, the oldest Methodist church now standing in America, was for a quarter of a century the most spacious edifice owned by the denomination. Its walls and roof were erected by a Reformed German congregation, in 1763. It was a large building for those days, being no less than fifty-five by eighty-five feet, and its size and grandeur were the talk of all the country round. For nearly six years the congregation worshipped under its roof, with its rough walls unfinished, and only the bare earth for a floor; at the end of that time, being hopelessly in debt, its trustees were arrested by the creditors, thrown into prison, and the house was put up at public auction to satisfy their demands. Among the bidders was a young man of feeble intellect, but of a wealthy family, who, from some foolish impulse, ran the building up to seven hundred and fifty pounds, Pennsylvania currency, (the “pound” in that colony was worth two dollars

and sixty-six cents, 11s. 1d.,) and he was declared its purchaser. The young man's father, not wishing to publicly expose his son's infirmity, paid the money for the church, and then began to look about him to dispose of the property with which he was encumbered ; and, hearing of Captain Webb and his little congregation, he offered to sell them the building for fifty pounds less than it had cost him. Captain Webb advised an acceptance of the offer ; his martial spirit suggested the name ; and thus St. George's Methodist Church was founded. The building then consisted of nothing but the four walls and a roof, but Captain Webb in full regimentals stood upon the bare ground and preached Sunday after Sunday to large and admiring crowds, who could well spare the elegances and even the conveniences of church architecture with such a preacher and such congregations.

For a long time this state of things continued, the Society being too poor to finish the church, so that its use for a riding-school by the British Army, when General Howe had his winter-quarters among the rebels in Philadelphia, was somewhat less surprising than if it had been possessed of doors, windows, floor, and the other usual appurtenances of a house of worship.

When peace was restored, the congregation set about placing the church on a sound financial basis, and with this end in view adopted, as the church record shows, the somewhat questionable method of a lottery. Whether or not this brought money into the church purse is not known. Everything about the church was conducted in an economic way, and so late as 1800, sand, and not carpets, covered its floors.

The rear wall on either side of the pulpit contains two high monumental tablets, on which are recorded the names of the long list of the pastors of "Old St. George's," as the place is affectionately called ; among which will be found the names of four bishops of the Methodist Episcopal Church, Asbury, Whatcoat, Roberts, and Scott ; Rev. Charles Pitman, a noted revivalist, under whose ministry the membership of the church increased to the number of fifteen hundred ; the late lamented Alfred Cookman ; and others of great mark and sainted memory.

In a little room in the building, which the iconoclast's hand has yet spared, several Conferences were held. In it still stands the chair in which Bishop Asbury sat, the desk at which he wrote, the hard benches which the preachers occupied, and around the wall are the same old wooden pegs on which they hung their broad-brimmed hats. It was in this church that the first American Methodist Conference was held in the month of June, 1773.

This is the parent Society, from which have sprung the great family of ninety-three Methodist churches that now stand in the city of Philadelphia and its immediate suburbs, with a membership of nearly twenty-five thousand, and church property valued at over two and a half millions of dollars.

The honour of preaching the first Methodist sermon in Baltimore belongs to John King, an English local preacher, who landed at Philadelphia in 1769. Finding that a large field was here opened for the Gospel, he felt moved to devote himself wholly to the work of the ministry, and at once offered his services to the Society in Philadelphia, and desired of them a licence to preach. While the brethren hesitated about the matter, King made an appointment to preach in the Potter's Field, and there demonstrated his ability by a rousing gospel sermon among the graves of the poor.

It was not long before he fell in with Strawbridge on his embryo circuit in Maryland, and for some length of time the two men travelled and preached right lovingly and powerfully together. Perhaps there was over-much power of one sort in the sermons of Brother King, for he was the man to whom Mr. Wesley gave that solemn charge, “Scream no more at the peril of your soul. It is said of our Lord, ‘He shall not cry;’ the word properly means, He shall not scream.”

King was accused by Mr. Wesley of being “stubborn” and “headstrong;” but these were qualities likely to be of good service amid the difficulties of a new country.

His pulpit, on the occasion of his first advent at Baltimore, was a blacksmith's block, the topography of which is still pointed out to Methodist antiquarians who visit the city.

The shop stood on what is now Front Street, near French Street, now re-named Bath Street, W. The foot-bridge here shown spanned the stream near Jones's Falls. The mansion in the distance is Howard Park, at that time the residence of Colonel John Eager Howard, the hero of the battle of Cowpens, in South Carolina. These grounds now comprise one of the finest portions of Baltimore.

His next sermon was from a table, at the junction of Baltimore and Calvert streets. His courage was tested on this occasion, for it was the militia training-day, and the drunken crowd charged upon him so effectually as to upset the table and lay him prostrate on the earth. He knew, however, that the noblest preachers of Methodism had suffered like trials in England, and he maintained his ground courageously. The commander of the troops, an Englishman, recognized him as a fellow-countryman, and, defending him, restored order, and allowed him to proceed. Victorious over the mob, he made so favourable an impression as to be invited to preach in the English Church of St. Paul's, but improved that opportunity with such fervour as to receive no repetition of the courtesy.

As this sturdy pioneer may not be met with again in these pages, let it here be recorded that he served in the ranks of the itinerant ministry, except an enforced location during the War of the Revolution, until 1803. At his death, in North Carolina, in a ripe old age, he was believed to be the last of the Methodist preachers who had shared in the pioneer service before the independence of America.

CHAPTER XIII.

WESLEYAN MISSIONARIES TO AMERICA.

NEITHER Strawbridge, Embury, Webb, nor King, came to America for the purpose of preaching the Gospel, though this was evidently the divine purpose in sending them. Their work was owned of God, and enjoyed by the people; but there was also, in the judgment of these pioneers, a need of regularly ordained ministers, and their hearts turned toward their spiritual father, Mr. Wesley, not only as a man who might send them ministerial reinforcements, but also as the divinely appointed head of a system of churchly order.

The call of the American Methodists for preachers produced a profound impression in England. The news of the rapid progress of the work of grace kindled the enthusiasm of the Wesleyan itinerants, and before the Conference met at which missionaries could be duly appointed, some humbler men, imbued with the enthusiasm of the new movement, were ready to throw themselves upon the hazards of the distant field, that they might share in the first combats and help win the first victories in the name of the Lord.

One of these men, whose soul was all ablaze with missionary zeal, was Robert Williams, an English local preacher, who, in view of the call from America, applied to Mr. Wesley for permission to go there and preach; which was granted, on condition that he should labour under the direction of the regular missionaries whenever they should arrive. Williams had no money for his passage, but he had a friend in Ireland named Ashton, a richer man than himself, who was just about to embark for America; he therefore hastily sold his horse to pay his debts, and with empty pockets but a full heart hastened to the ship, quite sure that his Irish friend

would not leave him behind. In this he was not disappointed, and Williams landed in New York in October, 1769, nearly two months before the regular Conference missionaries arrived.

To him belongs the honour of introducing Methodism into Virginia. After some successful soul-saving work along with Strawbridge and King in Maryland, he passed on to Norfolk, Va., in 1772, where he commenced his mission by a song, a prayer, and a sermon, from the steps of the Court-house ; and soon formed a little Society.

Williams was the first publisher of Mr. Wesley's books in America. In the year 1773 he was received by the first Conference, at Philadelphia ; and he was the first of the English missionaries who found a grave on American soil. His death occurred near Norfolk, Va., September 26, 1775. His funeral sermon was preached by Mr. Asbury, in which he says : " Perhaps no man in America has been an instrument of awakening so many souls as God has awakened by him."

The records of the twenty-sixth Methodist Conference, held at Leeds, August 3, 1769, contain these memorable questions and answers :—

" Q. We have a pressing call from our brethren of New York (who have built a preaching house) to come over and help them. Who is willing to go ?

" Ans. Richard Boardman and Joseph Pilmoor.

" Q. What can we do further in token of our brotherly love ?

" Ans. Let us now make a collection among ourselves.

" This was immediately done, and out of it £50 was allotted toward the payment of their debt, and about £20 given to our brethren for their passage."

Boardman, the senior of the two, was about thirty-one years of age. He is described as vigorous, zealous, a man of deep piety and strong understanding, and of an amiable disposition. He had been six years an itinerant preacher, and was at this time mourning the recent death of his wife. His Irish brethren at Cork, when, thirteen years later, they laid him in his grave, pronounced a high eulogy upon him as an eloquent and powerful preacher ; but his memory in

America is precious rather on account of his loving, gentle disposition, than of any distinguished pulpit ability.

Pilmoor had been converted in his sixteenth year, through the preaching of Wesley; had been educated at Wesley's Kingswood School; and had now itinerated about four years, having been admitted to the Conference in 1765. He was a man of high courage, commanding presence, much executive skill, and ready discourse. His term of service in America closed in 1774, in which year he returned to England; fell out with Mr. Wesley, who failed to include him in the "Legal Hundred;" returned again to America; received ordination in the Protestant Episcopal Church, and preached for some years in the cities of Philadelphia and New York, where he died in 1821. If we may judge by his portrait, he was a courtly gentleman, and possessed of natural abilities of a very high order.

The arrival of the missionaries at Philadelphia was a memorable event. After a rough voyage across the ocean, as they approached the Delaware Bay they encountered a most terrific gale that strewed the coast with wrecks, a fate which for a time their ship was expected to share; but in the midst of danger, looking death in the face, Boardman says: "I found myself exceedingly happy, and rested satisfied that death would be gain. I do not remember to have had one doubt of being eternally saved, should the mighty waters swallow us up."

At length, after a voyage of nine weeks, they landed at Philadelphia on the 24th of October, 1769. During part of this time the Rev. George Whitefield was also on the sea, which for the thirteenth time he was crossing to preach and die in America. All the old theological quarrels between him and Wesley had ceased long ago; and on reaching Philadelphia, from his beloved Orphan House at Savannah, he met the Wesleyan missionaries, hailed them with joy, and gave them his blessing.

The good work thus reinforced went on more rapidly than ever. Captain Webb, who was on the shore at Philadelphia to greet them, put into their hands a plan of the American circuit, which, with the help of himself, Williams, and King, they were to travel. New York, however, desired the full

service of Boardman, while Philadelphia wished to monopolize Pilmoor, and thus at the outset the itinerant system, so vital to the success of Methodism in America, was in danger of being replaced by a settled ministry.

Pilmoor was more abundant than Boardman in travels and adventures, if not more abundant in success. He opened his commission in Philadelphia with a sermon from the Court-house steps; filled his six months' term at St. George's Church acceptably, and then, after an exchange of parishes with the senior preacher, he took a wide range far to the south. He preached on the sidewalk in Baltimore; produced quite a sensation at Norfolk, Va.; held forth in the theatre at Charleston, S.C., where he could find no other door open to him; reached Savannah at last, where he paid a visit to Whitefield's Orphan House, everywhere winning his way with all classes of people.

His theatre service at Charleston was interrupted in a manner which would have embarrassed a more diffident man. In the midst of his sermon, what was his surprise to find himself, pulpit and all, suddenly lowered into the cellar! Some sons of Belial, who were familiar with the mysteries of the stage, had contrived to have him placed on one of the traps in the floor, whereby he was made to disappear in spite of himself; but, nothing harmed or frightened, he sprang upon the stage, regained the table which had served him for a pulpit, and taking it in his arms, he invited his hearers to adjourn with him to the adjoining yard, where there were no trap-doors to trouble him. "Come on, my friends," cried he; "we will, by the grace of God, defeat the devil this time, and not be driven by him from our work;" and when they had gathered again about him, he finished his sermon in triumph in the open air.

His plain preaching on his first appearance at Norfolk had roused the opposition of the regular clergyman of that parish, who, after his departure, made an attack on the Methodists from his pulpit, taking for his text the words, "Be not righteous overmuch." This was duly reported to Pilmoor, who soon took a second occasion to preach in the town, which was then a notoriously wicked place. He gave out that he would take for his text the verse of Scripture next

following the one which the parish parson had used against him ; and when a great crowd had assembled, expecting something exciting, Pilmoor commenced his sermon from the words, "Be not overmuch wicked." "I have been informed," said he, "that a minister in this town has given its citizens a solemn caution against being overmuch righteous:" then, lifting his hands in amazement, he exclaimed, "And he hath given this caution in Norfolk!"

The effect of such a turning of the tables can be better imagined than described. The incident is of value as giving a glimpse of one of the men—and there were many like him—who helped to lay the foundation of the Methodist Church in America ; men who were incapable of fear, who were surprised at nothing, and who did not know the meaning of defeat.

And now appears a name ever memorable in the history of the Methodist Church in America ; a character of the purest and strongest that is possible to mortals, and a career the most heroic that was ever witnessed under this western sky. Like all the other great Methodists, Francis Asbury was first the product and then the promoter of Methodism. He grew with its growth, and strengthened with its strength, till, from a good, conscientious, savingly converted man of sound common sense, and only fair ministerial talent, he became the John Wesley of the West ; a man who, in the fulness of his strength, had no other peer as a captain of the Lord's host in all the English-speaking world.

A careful study of his Journals affords no evidence of superior genius. Under ordinary circumstances he would have come to no greater glory and honour than that to which many of the better class of Methodist preachers have attained ; but God called him to be the bishop of the Methodists in America, as he called Wesley to be their bishop in Great Britain, and to both these chosen servants He gave that broad, deep culture of episcopal experience and responsibility, and that heavenly grace and power, which lifts their heads so far above the ordinary level of the Christian ministry. The pre-eminent greatness of these men was not natural, but supernatural ; a further proof of the Divine origin, character, and mission of that form of religion called Methodism.

But this is not the place to sum up and set forth the character of the pioneer bishop; that task, at best a difficult one, can better be performed at the close than at the commencement of his career. It is always allowable in history as well as in art to paint a man at his best.

At the Wesleyan Conference of 1771, volunteers for America were again called for, and of the five who offered themselves two were chosen—Francis Asbury and Richard Wright. The latter of these, after a short period of service, returned to England, and disappeared from the ranks of travelling preachers; the former remained to win immortal fame.

Asbury was then one of the young preachers; he had been in the ministry but five years, and was only about twenty-six years old. He was, however, thoroughly grounded in Methodist experience, fairly well taught in Methodist doctrine, was a thoughtful, devoted young man, who could endure hardness, and one who could learn and grow. These solid qualifications won him the appointment as Mr. Wesley's "assistant" in America, which title implied the general superintendence over all the American work, though he was by far the youngest man in it.

Asbury was the only son of poor parents. He was born in the parish of Handsworth, Staffordshire, about four miles from Birmingham, on the 20th of August, 1745. Through childhood he was faithfully taught in the things of religion by his godly mother, was brought to a saving knowledge of Christ when a youth of fifteen, was a class-leader and a local preacher at seventeen, and at twenty-one an itinerant in the regular work. His school-days were neither long nor pleasant. It was his misfortune to fall into the hands of a brutal master, of whom he had such a dread, that, though he was fond enough of his book, the school was quite insufferable; he therefore left it when about thirteen years of age, and went to learn a trade. His want of early instruction was a great affliction to him in after-life, concerning which he writes in his Journal: "While I was a travelling preacher in England I was much tempted, finding myself exceedingly ignorant of almost everything a minister of the Gospel ought to know." This deficiency he made up in part. As he travelled his

great American circuits, it was his custom to ride with his book open before him, and in this "irregular" manner he made himself master of the Greek and Hebrew Scriptures, and other essential branches of sound learning. But the great requirements were a conscious experience of regenerating grace, and a Divine call to the ministry of the word; it being presumed that if God called a man to preach, he could preach; and that if he did his best, God was willing to be responsible for the consequences. On these two points young Asbury was clear.

It was in Asbury's native county of Staffordshire that some of the most violent persecutions of the Methodists occurred. The parish of Handsworth was in "the Black Country," of infamous memory, and Asbury and his mother had some experience of mobs and riots, though the worst of these occurred at an earlier date. This was the country of which Charles Wesley writes, that in riding through it one might distinguish the houses of the Methodists by the marks of violence upon them; and where, on one occasion, John Wesley was clubbed almost to death. "The mob," he says, "reigned for nearly a week, and the noise on every side was like the roaring of the sea." It was at the risk of the repetition of these horrors that young Asbury commenced his work as a local preacher; an experience well calculated to save him from "softness," that special abomination of John Wesley.

The arrival of Messrs. Asbury and Wright at Philadelphia, October 7, 1771, was hailed with joy. "The people," says Mr. Asbury, "looked on us with pleasure, hardly knowing how to show their love sufficiently, bidding us welcome with fervent affection, and receiving us as angels of God."

There is something fanciful as well as grand in the saying of Wesley, "The world is my parish." He did, indeed, cross the Atlantic in his early life to preach to the Indians under the auspices of General Oglethorpe, in the colony of Georgia, but his stay was a brief one, and after his real life-work commenced he never left the British Islands; though the sturdy claim of his *right* to go everywhere, and to preach everywhere, was a most astounding doctrine to the localized Church dignitaries of those days. There is nothing fanciful,

however, in saying of Asbury that he had the New World for his parish; for he made it into one great circuit, and travelled it in true itinerant fashion for over thirty years, preaching incessantly, day and night, week-days and Sundays, stopping not for storms without shelter, for forests without roads, for rivers without bridges, or for a purse without money.

When he landed at Philadelphia in 1771, there were about six hundred Methodists scattered over his parish, with ten preachers, including Embury and the brave old soldier, Captain Webb. His warm reception gave him fresh vigour, and he plunged at once into the work; first of all, like a skilful general, starting out to reconnoitre his position, and view the fields of his future triumphs.

His first affliction was the habit of the preachers of going into winter quarters in the snug city churches. "At present I am dissatisfied," says he. "I judge we are to be shut up in the cities this winter. My brethren seem unwilling to leave the cities, but I think I shall show them the way. I am in trouble, and more trouble is at hand, for I am determined to make a stand against all partiality. I have nothing to seek but the glory of God; nothing to fear but His displeasure. I am come over with an upright intention, and through the grace of God I will make it appear; and I am determined that no man shall bias me with soft words and fair speeches; nor will I ever fear (the Lord helping me) the face of man, or know any man after the flesh, if I beg my bread from door to door; but whomsoever I please or displease, I will be faithful to God, to the people, and to my own soul."

In 1772, Captain Webb returned from England with another reinforcement. He had made a very deep impression upon Mr. Wesley and the Conference at large; though Charles Wesley thought him a fanatic, because of his glowing description of the American field. Webb demanded two of their chief men, Christopher Hopper and Joseph Benson; but as these could not be spared, Thomas Rankin and George Shadford were appointed in their stead.

Rankin was a Scotchman; one of the few men of that nation who have found their way into the itinerant ranks, and one of the commanding men of the Methodist fraternity. He had been awakened by hearing the preaching of some of

John Haime's Methodist troopers, who were converted and called out at the time of the great revival among the army in Flanders in 1745, and who returned to preach a free salvation in Presbyterian Scotland. He had listened to the preaching of Whitefield, Wesley, and Mather; had stood by the latter in showers of dirt, stones, rotten eggs, etc., arguments with which the doctrines of that class of preachers were often controverted in those days; but in spite of them he came into the enjoyment of saving grace, and in 1761 joined Wesley's band of itinerants, rode a circuit with sturdy John Nelson, became a notable revival preacher, showed the points of a strict disciplinarian, and after eleven years of hard work was appointed by Wesley, in 1772, to the head of all the Methodist ministry in America.

At first Asbury, who was thus superseded, submitted with good grace, as a younger man to an elder, but presently there began to be evidences of a good deal of human nature in these "old-fashioned Methodists," of very much the same quality as that which sometimes causes friction with the modern machinery of the itinerant work. Rankin was disappointed in not finding more and larger societies in America, as well as greatly scandalized at their want of form and order. Whether, on the other hand, the young bishop in embryo did not relish the same treatment from Rankin as he was inclined to give to his own subordinates, or whether the Scotchman's notions of the powers of an "assistant" exceeded his knowledge of the situation, does not at this distance plainly appear; but the unfavourable opinions of Asbury, which Rankin wrote to Mr. Wesley, and which led to Asbury's recall to England, were afterward shown to be erroneous, and the young pioneer was reinstated in the favour of his chief, whose letter of recall was, fortunately, never received. Of Rankin Mr. Asbury makes this significant note: "Though he will not be admired as a preacher, yet as a disciplinarian he will fill his place."

George Shadford was a man after Captain Webb's own heart. Like him, Shadford had been a soldier; like him, he was "full of life and fire;" a successful revival preacher; a genial, not to say jovial companion; and capable of comprehending and revelling in the wild, wide, adventurous work

which opened before him in the New World. If these two men, Webb and Shadford, could have been converted to the Continental Congress instead of holding steadfast in their loyalty to their king, they might have been two princes in our Israel. But this was hardly to be expected of two old red-coats; and thus on the breaking out of the war, which soon followed, they were lost to America; and what was her loss was by no means their gain.

During his term of service in the English militia, Shadford had been deeply convicted of sin at a Methodist meeting in Gainsborough, of which experience he says: "I was tried, cast, and condemned. I then made a vow to Almighty God, that if He would spare me until that time twelvemonth (at which time I should be at liberty from the militia, and intended to return home), I would then serve Him. So I resolved to venture another year in the old way, damned or saved. O what a mercy that I am not in hell! that God did not take me at my word, and cut me off immediately!

Shadford now became a local preacher, and when Wesley met him in 1768, he summoned him into the itinerant field. His first circuit was in Cornwall, the next in Kent, and the next in Norwich. In 1772, hearing Webb's appeal for America in the Leeds Conference, his spirit was stirred within him to go; and Rankin, who was first appointed, chose him for his companion. Both of them, however, continued their English work till the spring of 1773, when on Good Friday, April 9th, they set sail, and on the 1st of June anchored in Delaware Bay.

Previous to their departure, Wesley wrote Shadford a cheery and affectionate letter, saying, among other things: "Dear George, the time has arrived for you to embark for America. You must go down to Bristol, where you will meet with Thomas Rankin, Captain Webb, and his wife. I let you loose, George, on the continent of America. Publish your message in the open face of the sun, and do all the good you can."

When he reached the wharf where the ship lay, he was reminded of a dream which he had six years before, and in which a written message seemed sent him from heaven, requiring him "to go and preach the Gospel in a foreign

land." "I thought," says he, "I was conveyed to the place where the ship lay, in which I was to embark, in an instant. The wharf and ship appeared as plain to me as if I were awake. I replied, 'Lord, I am willing to go in Thy name, but I am afraid a people of different nations and languages will not understand me.' An answer to this was given: 'Fear not, for I am with thee.' I awoke, awfully impressed with the presence of God, and was really full of divine love; and a relish of it remained upon my spirit for many days. I could not tell what this meant, and revolved these things in my mind for a long time. But when I came to Peel, and saw the ship and wharf, then all came fresh to my mind." Shadford made full proof of his ministry during his stay; and, as will duly appear, was the last of the English preachers to abandon the American work.

The first Methodist Conference in America was held in what there was of St. George's Church in Philadelphia—little else but four rough walls and a roof. It began on Wednesday, the 14th of July, 1773, and continued two days. Rankin of course was the presiding officer of the little assembly, which numbered ten men all told, including Messrs. Boardman and Pilmoor, who were just about to return to England.

Asbury was detained on his New York circuit, and did not appear till the second day of the session. He was the tenth member, making the number the same as in Wesley's first English Conference, held twenty-nine years before. The members of this first American Conference were all Europeans. They were Thomas Rankin, Richard Boardman, Joseph Pilmoor, Francis Asbury, Richard Wright, George Shadford, Thomas Webb, John King, Abraham Whitworth, and Joseph Yearbry, who had accompanied Rankin and Shadford from England.

Alas! even at the first meeting of these "old-fashioned Methodists" there was a contention among them. The irrepressible brother Strawbridge had violated Mr. Wesley's rule, and taken upon himself to celebrate the sacraments of baptism and the Lord's Supper; and the first three questions and answers were doubtless aimed at him. They were, however ineffectual, as will presently appear; and out of this

very question arose one of the storms which shook early American Methodism to its centre.

At this first Conference Asbury was appointed to the Baltimore circuit, which embraced all the societies in Maryland, and included nearly one half of all the Methodists then in America. These societies had been formed in a very unmethodical manner; indeed, the whole body was thought, by Rankin and Asbury, to be sadly wanting in order and discipline; and one of the first cares of the new preacher was to organize the societies into classes, one of men and one of women, on the true Wesleyan plan. It is worthy of note that Asbury had great difficulty in finding leaders for the classes of men, while there was no lack of female talent to lead the classes of women.

It was now needful to house the Baltimore Society, as it had outgrown the hospitable dwellings at which it had hitherto been entertained; and another sail-loft, as in New York, was fixed upon; which place, at the corner of Mills and Block streets, was generously allowed them for their meetings free of charge. Though a sizeable room, it was soon filled to overflowing; and so wide was the spread, and so rapid the progress of the good work, that it was determined to build two new houses of worship, about a mile and a half apart; one of which, to wit, the chapel in Lovely Lane, is memorable as the place where the Methodist Episcopal Church was organized at the Christmas Conference of 1784.

The last missionaries from England appointed by Mr. Wesley were James Dempster and Richard Rodda. They were accompanied by William Glendenning, who came as a volunteer. Dempster was a Scotchman of good education, and a man of power. He was appointed in New York in 1755; but ill-health, the excitements of the coming war, a latent attachment to the Church of Scotland, and last, but not least, matrimony, all combined to make his position an unhappy one; and after only about a year of service in the American work, added to his ten years of itinerancy in England, he took his departure to the Presbyterians; taking with him also, by special declaration, all his Methodist theology, of which he made a good use among that people until his death in 1804.

Rodda, like Wesley, laboured under the impression that loyalty to King George was an essential part of an Englishman's religion. The rebellious spirit of the colonists aroused his wrath, and in his efforts to withstand the manifest destiny of America, he was accused of circulating over his district in Delaware the royal proclamation against the rebels; on which account he was obliged to flee for his life. He took refuge on board a British man-of-war, which had been sent out to chastise these undutiful subjects, and at length was carried to England.

Glendenning followed the example of Dempster, and left the denomination; Pilmoor and Boardman had departed in 1772; and now, with the difficulties of their situation daily increasing, which in a large measure were the results of the indiscretions of Rodda and Rankin, the country became too hot for the English Methodists, and following the example of their neighbours, the episcopal clergy, they every one, with the exception of Asbury, forsook the little church in the wilderness, and returned to the mother-country. And here we fall in again with Whitefield.

The thirteenth and last voyage of this tireless traveller and matchless master of the art of preaching was in the autumn of 1769; the same gale driving him across the ocean which nearly wrecked the first Wesleyan missionaries, Boardman and Pilmoor, in the Delaware Bay. For more than thirty years he had carried two great countries in his heart, crossing the sea between them again and again, at the call of his Savannah Orphanage on the one side, and of his London congregation at the Tottenham Court Road tabernacle on the other.

When in England, he must needs range about with the wildest freedom, preaching incessantly to vast congregations, usually in the open air; enduring persecution with cheerfulness; emerging from a mob with a hallelujah! swaying the multitudes with his eloquence, and leaving them to make the most of it when he was gone. Unlike his friend Wesley, he possessed no genius for organization, and had it not been for the munificence and sagacity of the Countess of Huntingdon, the lady "bishop of Calvinistic Methodism," there would have remained as little in the three kingdoms as in the

thirteen colonies to remind them that such a man as Whitefield ever lived. Within a short distance of Wesley's Old Foundry stood Whitefield's Tabernacle, which, in his new-found zeal for the doctrine of predestination, he caused to be erected as a fortress from which, as a base of operations, he might oppose the spread of the Arminian theology. Alas! that so glorious a soul should have wasted so much time and strength on such an ill-fated cause.

He who was the first to learn the blessed mystery of regeneration, and the first to take the Gospel out from its Gothic prisons in the State churches, and give it to the multitudes under the open sky, was at length so fettered by theories, and so shut in from fellowship with the Christian communions in Great Britain, that, although attended by admiring multitudes, he remained almost alone. It was not possible that a great religious community should at that late day grow up in the shadow of the Genevan theology. Thus, while the Wesleyan movement spread and flourished, the leader of Calvinistic Methodism, after thirty years of labour and controversy, had but a very diminutive body of adherents.

But in America Whitefield's star shone pre-eminent. His theology was then the doctrine of New England; he was cordially admired and loved by the orthodox, and as cordially hated by the heterodox, all the way from Savannah to Portland. Until his last visit there were no Wesleyans on the continent to vex him; and thus again and again he swept along the shores of the New World on wave after wave of power and glory. But, as in England, so in America, he built the most of his castles in the air. His art was like that of the frost-work on a window pane or the colouring in the clouds of sunset skies.

What then? Does not God employ Himself in painting such pictures and tracing such lines, as well as in hardening the rocks and piling up mountains? Why, then, shall not this angel of eloquence flying through the midst of heaven be hailed as a messenger of the Lord, even as if his thoughts had taken on the solid forms of history, and his work had been the centre around which had crystallized ten thousand churches with their millions of worshipping souls?

Before Whitefield's last voyage across the Atlantic he had re-established friendly relations with his old friends, the Wesleys ; and the doctrinal zeal of Lady Huntingdon had so far cooled down, that, after having expelled everybody from her Trevecca College who was guilty of believing in Wesleyan theology, she at length admitted Mr. Wesley himself to the pulpits of her chapels, and thus a cordial peace was reached after years of useless war. This reunion of old friends, called by Charles Wesley “the Quadruple Alliance,” was made in the year 1767, and lasted till Whitefield's death, after which the holy war was resumed by Mr. Whitefield's friends, in the interest of the doctrines he represented, with even more savageness than before.

During this cessation of hostilities it was arranged between the two great Methodistic leaders that he who survived the other should preach his funeral sermon : and as a *codicil* to his last will and testament Whitefield inserted the following bequest :—

“I also leave a mourning ring to my honoured and dear friends and disinterested fellow-labourers, the Rev. Messrs. John and Charles Wesley, in token of my indissoluble union with them in heart and Christian affection, notwithstanding our differences in judgment about some particular points of doctrine. Grace be with all them, of whatever denomination, that love our Lord Jesus, our common Lord, in sincerity.”

As further proof of his fraternal love he told his congregation at the Tottenham Court Road Chapel that he desired to be buried therein, and that he wished the Wesley brothers might lie beside him. “We will,” said he, “all lie together.” You refuse them entrance here while living: they can do you no harm when they are dead.” Whitefield's wish was not realised ; but he lived long enough to welcome John Wesley to his pulpit, over which, for various reasons, chief of which was his frequent and extended absence, he had very little control.

For many years Whitefield's health had been feeble, but he persisted in preaching, in which he took the most intense delight. His spirits were lively, often jubilant, in spite of increasing infirmities ; and his letters abound with expressions of joy and praise.

His last sermon was preached at Exeter, N.H., the easternmost point of his tour, in the autumn of 1770.

"You are more fit to go to bed than to preach," said one of his friends, who noticed his extreme exhaustion.

"True, sir," replied Whitefield. Then, clasping his hands, he looked up to heaven, and added, "Lord Jesus, I am weary in Thy work, but not of it."

The subject of this discourse, which was two hours in length—the mighty effort of a dying man—was "Faith and Works." He laboured heavily at first, but at length his soul roused up the last forces of his body, and his voice rang out with its old power. "Works! works!" cried he, "a man get to heaven by works! I would as soon think of climbing to the moon on a rope of sand."

From Exeter he hastened southward to Newburyport, Mass., fainting with exhaustion and struggling with the asthma. His coming having been noised abroad, a crowd gathered in front of the parsonage, and pressed into its hall, eager to hear even a word from the most eloquent preacher on earth; but he was too ill to preach, and after a light supper, took his candle to go to his bedchamber. The sight of the eager throng moved him, and he stopped on the stairs, holding the candle in his hand, and spoke to them till the candle burned out in its socket.

The next morning God had taken him. His death occurred at six o'clock on Sunday morning, September 30, 1770, in the fifty-fifth year of his age. He died of asthma, and of doing the work of two or three men for a period of nearly thirty years.

In accordance with his request, a tomb was made for him underneath the pulpit of the church at Newburyport, and on the following Tuesday loving hands laid his mortal part therein, in the presence of weeping thousands, who, though he was of another country, mourned him not as a stranger, but as a brother of their own blood.

In Georgia his funeral was celebrated with the utmost love and reverence. In his London Tabernacle there were most impressive memorial services, chief among which was the funeral sermon by Wesley, from the text, "Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my last end be like his."

It was in this sermon, as already mentioned in Part I. of this volume, that Wesley gave such mortal offence to Toplady and Rowland Hill.

In theology Whitefield was not a master. There was one doctrine, however, that he understood, namely, the doctrine of regeneration ; and this he knew by that best of all means of knowledge, his experience. To him the new birth was the point of all preaching, the central truth of all religion. In this appears the divinity of his mission. It is hardly conceivable that God should so gloriously endow a man to preach any other doctrine.

Now that the voice is passed there remains almost nothing of all his thinking or his doing. No printed pages hold the substance of his wonderful discourses, for their substance was too subtle to be captured by the crude processes of writing or printing ; no system of benevolence has survived him to prove how devotedly he loved everybody except himself ; no theory of preaching put forth by this master of pulpit rhetoric and elocution reveals the mystery of his art ; no treatise of doctrine sets forth the distinctive faith of him who believed so mightily ; no record shows again the visions of him who had the eye of a seer ; and only a single church, and the ruins of an orphan school, scorched with fire and deserted by its occupation, help to account for what he did with all the money he begged and gave away. He was “a voice,” and his history is an echo ; yet doubtless in the upper sky, and on the celestial air, it still carries with it all the music of its sweet humanity, and all the resonance of its God-given power.

CHAPTER XIV.

METHODISM AND THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION.

WESLEY'S "Calm Address" to the people of the British Colonies in North America, which, as has been shown, caused him so much trouble at home, was also a great affliction to his friends abroad. Some copies of it found their way into the hands of prominent revolutionists, and thenceforth until near the close of the war a Methodist preacher was an object of suspicion; a man liable to be robbed without protection, and imprisoned without even a form of justice.

In view of the increasing troubles of his brethren in America, of which his own political course was one chief occasion, Mr. Wesley addressed them the following fatherly advice, under date of London, March 1, 1775:—

"MY DEAR BRETHREN,—You were never in your lives in so critical a situation as you are at this time. It is your part to be peace-makers: to be loving and tender to all, but to addict yourselves to no party. In spite of all solicitations, of rough or smooth words, say not one word against one or the other side. Keep yourselves pure; do all you can to help and soften all; but beware how you adopt another's jar.

"See that you act in full union with each other; this is of the utmost consequence. Not only let there be no bitterness or anger, but no shyness or coldness between you. Mark all those that would set one against the other. Some such will never be wanting. But give them no countenance; rather ferret them out, and drag them into open day."

But it was too late to repair the mischief he had done. The name "Methodist" began to have a Toryish flavour, especially if the bearer of it were an Englishman; and even the native preachers, into whose hands the work was soon to fall, were persecuted on account of their alleged want of devotion to the cause of the Revolution.

William Watters, the first American itinerant preacher, was born in Baltimore County, Maryland, October 16th, 1751. He possessed what may be called the religious temperament, and was thought to be a Christian from his youth; but at the age of twenty he heard Strawbridge, Williams, and King, who all preached the doctrine that the Saviour preached to Nicodemus, but which, he says, "was all a mystery to him." At length, after a season of deep conviction, he was clearly brought into a state of regeneration, and presently, through the reading of one of Mr. Wesley's sermons on sanctification, he became a possessor and advocate of that experience also. Thus the race of native American Methodist preachers begins with an example of the divine power of those great doctrines of the Gospel, the preaching whereof has ever been attended with the awakening of sinners, the pardon of penitents, the regeneration of believers, and the perfecting in love of consecrated souls.

In 1772, being then just come of age, Watters was "called out," as the phrase was, by Robert Williams, who took him with him on his Norfolk Circuit, to learn how to preach by preaching, just as people learn to do other things by doing them. The departure of this young recruit for the itinerant ministry was a very solemn and affecting event. His friends hung about him and wept over him as if he had been a volunteer leaving home to join the army in active service, or, later on, a foreign missionary leaving his native country to live and labour and die in a heathen land.

But the greatest marvel of all was Benjamin Abbott, a Jersey farmer, who at the age of forty was transformed from a drinking, fighting, swearing, gambling sinner—a leader in all sorts of wickedness, and a terror in the community—into a man of God, a preacher of righteousness, whose success still stands unequalled in all the religious history of America. Not even Whitefield could attract such vast congregations; while the spiritual power he wielded was absolutely incredible to that slow faith which refuses to believe in an effect without an adequate visible cause, whether it be in mechanics or religion, nature or grace.

In the days of his impenitence he had often attended divine service with his wife, who was a member of the

Presbyterian Church ; yet he says : “ I had never heard the nature of conviction or conversion. It was a dark time respecting religion, and little or nothing was ever said about experimental religion : and to my knowledge I never had heard either man or woman say that they had the pardoning love of God in their souls, or knew their sins were forgiven.”

But at length one of the itinerants visited his neighbourhood, and Abbott, who was now often tormented with a sense of his sins and his danger, went to find out what help there might be for him in this new form of religion. Of his exercises of mind on this occasion he gives the following account :—

“ The word reached my heart in such a manner that it shook every joint in my body ; tears flowed in abundance, and I cried out for mercy, of which the people took notice, and many were melted into tears. When the sermon was over, the people flocked around the preacher, and began to dispute with him about principles of religion. I said that there never was such preaching as this ; but the people said, ‘ Abbott is going mad.’

“ Satan suggested to me that my day of grace was over ; therefore I might pray and cry, but he was sure of me at last.

“ In passing through a lonely wood at night, I was tempted to commit suicide ; but while looking for a suitable place for the deed, I was deterred by an inward voice, which said, ‘ This torment is nothing compared to hell.’ ” This was logic too clear to be resisted. “ I forthwith mounted my waggon, and believing the tempter to be immediately behind me, drove home under the greatest anxiety imaginable, with my hair rising on my head. My dreams that night were appalling ; the next day, seeking relief in the labours of the field, my troubled heart beat so loud that I could hear the strokes. I threw down my scythe, and stood weeping for my sins. I believe I could not have continued in the body, had not God moderated the pain and anxiety I was in, but must have expired before the going down of the sun.” Under this terrible stress of conviction he fell upon his knees in the field, and, for the first time in his life, prayed aloud.

Hastening the same day to a Methodist meeting, he says:—

"I went in, sat down, and took my little son upon my knee. The preacher began soon after. His word was attended with such power, that it ran through me from head to foot; I shook and trembled like Belshazzar, and felt that I should cry out if I did not leave the house, which I determined to do, that I might not expose myself among the people; but when I attempted to put my little son down and rise to go, I found that my strength had failed me, and the use of my limbs was so far gone that I was utterly unable to rise. Immediately I cried aloud, '*Save, Lord, or I perish!*' But before the preacher concluded I refrained and wiped my eyes; my heart gave way to shame, and I was tempted to wish I was dead or could die, as I had so exposed myself, that my neighbours and acquaintance would laugh at and despise me. When the meeting was over, I thought to speak to the preacher; but such a crowd got round him, disputing points of doctrine, that I could not conveniently get an opportunity. That evening I set up family prayer, it being the first time I ever had attempted to pray in my family. My wife, being a strict Presbyterian, was a praying woman, and much pleased with having family prayer, so that she proved a great help to me, and endeavoured to encourage me in my duty; although, dear creature, at that time she knew nothing of experimental religion."

The next day, accompanied by his wife, Abbott went more than ten miles to a Methodist assembly, appealed to the minister for counsel and comfort, and asked to be baptized, hoping it would relieve his distress; for as yet he had no idea of justification by faith.

"Are you a Quaker?" asked the preacher.

"No," he replied, "I am nothing but a poor, wretched, condemned sinner," and burst into tears.

"Then you are the very man Christ died for," replied the preacher. "It is the lost that Christ came to seek, and the greatest of sinners that He came to save."

That night, the 11th of October, 1772—he is minute in such memorable dates—he awoke from terrible dreams, and saw, as in a vision, the Lord Jesus, with extended arms,

saying, "I died for you." He wept and adored God with a joyful heart. "At that moment," he continues, "the Scriptures were wonderfully opened to my understanding. My heart felt as light as a bird, being relieved of that load of guilt which before had bowed down my spirits, and my body felt as active as when I was eighteen, so that the outward and inward man were both animated." Upon this he rose from his bed, called up the family, expounded the Scriptures and prayed, and then set off to spend the day in telling his neighbours what God had done for him.

While he was relating his experience to his neighbours, and exhorting them to flee from the wrath to come, some laughed, others cried, and some thought he had gone distracted. Before night a report was spread all through the neighbourhood that he was raving mad. A neighbouring clergyman tried laboriously to deliver him from the "strong delusions of the devil;" whereat Abbott was a good deal perplexed. "It was suggested to my mind," he says, "he may be right. But I went a little out of the road, and kneeled down and prayed to God, if I was deceived, to undeceive me; and the Lord said to me, 'Why do you doubt? Is not Christ all-sufficient? is He not able? Have you not felt His blood applied?' I then sprang upon my feet, and cried out, 'Not all the devils in hell shall make me doubt;' for I knew that I was converted. At that instant I was filled with unspeakable raptures of joy."

Was not this also "a brand plucked from the burning?"

On one occasion he was called to see a Quaker woman, who had been awakened under one of his sermons, and was in an awful agony of conviction. When he arrived, she was sitting with both hands clenched in her hair, and crying out, "Lord, have mercy on me! Save, Lord, or I perish!"

Abbott told her to pray in faith; look to Jesus; lay hold of the promises, and God would have mercy on her.

"But I cannot pray," said the distracted woman.

"You do pray very well," said Abbott. "Go on."

"She cannot pray in English," said a pious friend who was present.

"Let her pray in Dutch, then. God understands Dutch as well as English," was Abbott's reply.

A hymn was now sung, and when it was over, Abbott says, “I felt such faith, that I told them the Lord would deliver her; and said, Let us pray. In a few minutes she clapped her hands together, and cried, ‘My Lord, my God, and my Father!’ Her soul was immediately set at liberty, and she sprang up, rejoicing, and giving glory to God. Her husband burst into a flood of tears. I exhorted him to look to God, and he would find mercy. In about six weeks after he was safely converted.”

If any one is saying these were all common, ignorant people, and therefore these excitements are natural enough, let him read this account of the conversion of another style of man, taken from the pages of Stevens’s admirable “History of the Methodist Episcopal Church”:—

“Asbury’s usefulness in the Baltimore Circuit at this time had permanently important results. He gathered into the young societies not a few of those influential families whose opulence and social position gave material strength to Methodism through much of its early history in that city, while their exemplary devotion helped to maintain its primitive purity and power.”

Henry Dorsey Gough and his family were distinguished examples. Gough possessed a fortune in lands and money amounting to more than three hundred thousand dollars. He had married a daughter of Governor Ridgeley: his country residence—Perry Hall, about twelve miles from the city—was one of the most spacious and elegant in America at that time, but he was an unhappy man in the midst of his luxury. His wife had been deeply impressed by the Methodist preaching, but he forbade her to hear them again. While revelling with wine and gay companions one evening, it was proposed that they should divert themselves by going together to a Methodist assembly. Asbury was the preacher, and no godless diversion could be found in his presence.

“What nonsense!” exclaimed one of the convivialists as they returned, “what nonsense have we heard to-night!”

“No,” replied Gough, startling them with sudden surprise; “what we have heard is the truth, the truth as it is in Jesus.”

“I will never hinder you again from hearing the Metho-

dists," he said, as he entered his house and met his wife. The impression of the sermon was so profound, that he could no longer enjoy his accustomed pleasures. He became deeply serious, and at last melancholy, "and was near destroying himself" under the awakened sense of his misspent life ; but God mercifully preserved him. Riding to one of his plantations, he heard the voice of prayer and praise in a cabin, and listening, discovered that a negro from a neighbouring estate was leading the devotions of his own slaves, and offering fervent thanksgivings for the blessings of their depressed lot. His heart was touched, and, with emotion, he exclaimed, "Alas, O Lord, I have my thousands and tens of thousands, and yet, ungrateful wretch that I am, I never thanked Thee as this poor slave does, who has scarcely clothes to put on, or food to satisfy his hunger." The luxurious master was taught a lesson on the nature of true contentment and happiness, which he could never forget. His work-worn servants in their lowly cabins knew a blessedness which he had never found in his sumptuous mansion. He returned home, pondering the mystery, with a distressed and contrite heart. He retired from his table, which was surrounded by a large company of his friends, and threw himself upon his knees in a chamber. While there, imploring the mercy of God, he received conscious pardon and peace. In a transport of joy he went to his company, exclaiming, "I have found the Methodists' blessing ; I have found the Methodists' God !"

"Perry Hall," says Lednum, "was the resort of much company, among whom the sceptic and the Romanist were sometimes found. Members of the Baltimore bar, the *élite* of Maryland, were there. But it mattered not who were there ; when the bell rang for family devotion, they were seen in the chapel which Mr. Gough had erected near by, and if there was no male person present who could lead the devotions, Mrs. Gough read a chapter in the Bible, gave out a hymn, which was often raised and sung by the coloured servants, after which she would engage in prayer. Take her altogether, 'few such have been found on earth.' Asbury called her a 'true daughter' to himself ; and Coke, 'a precious woman of fine sense.'"

Thus among high and low, rich and poor, the Lord was

raising up a spiritual people to praise Him, and to carry forward His work in the New World.

The second American Conference met in Philadelphia, May 25, 1774. The reports showed ten circuits, situated in the colonies of New York, "The Jerseys," Pennsylvania, Maryland, and Virginia; seventeen preachers—an increase of seven in one year; and 2,073 members of society—nearly double the number reported in 1773.

Of the proceedings of the Conference, there remain only a few references to economical arrangements. It was ordered that "every itinerant in full membership in the Conference must own the horse provided for him by his circuit;" that "each preacher should be allowed six pounds, Pennsylvania currency, a quarter, besides travelling expenses; that Rankin, as "General Assistant," should be supported by the circuits where he might spend his time; that a collection should be made at Easter on each circuit to relieve the chapel debts and itinerants in want; and that all were to change circuits at the end of six months; while Asbury and Pilmoor, in Philadelphia and New York, were to make an exchange once a quarter.

Among the little band who held the field during the war of the Revolution was Freeborn Garrettson, whose name and fame are so deeply interwoven in the history of Methodism in New York. He was born in 1752, in Maryland, on the western shore of the Chesapeake Bay, near the mouth of the Susquehanna River, where the Garrettson plantation still remains in the possession of a branch of the family. This able and admirable minister and organizer was converted in 1775, and at once the way seemed to open for his becoming a preacher. This idea he resisted as long as he dared; but at length, after being warned in visions by night, and overwhelmed with conviction by day, he submitted to the call of God, and entered the regular work of the itinerant ministry in 1775, in which he soon found use for all his native courage and his heaven-born patience and devotion. A "Tory" was an object of especial hatred to the patriots, among whom, as we have seen, the impression prevailed that the Methodist preachers were all Tories, and on which account they were in constant peril. In Maryland, Garrettson was mobbed and

imprisoned on suspicion of too much loyalty to King George; and on one occasion he was beaten almost to death with a stick by one of the magistrates of Queen Anne County, for no other offence than that of being a Methodist preacher.

Pedicord, another itinerant, was attacked and beaten on the public road with such violence that he carried the scars to his grave. Foster, Wren, and Forrest were thrown into prison, and only released by their furnishing bonds for their future "good behaviour," which was understood to mean not to preach any more in the county. But there were always more counties somewhere, and thus the brave pioneers held to their work, literally obeying the command of Christ: "When they persecute you in this city, flee ye into another;" and patiently accepting the truth of His declaration, that "The disciple is not above his Master, nor the servant above his Lord."

While these persecutions were in progress in Maryland, the neighbouring colony of Virginia was the scene of a great revival of religion, chiefly under the labours of that warm-hearted English evangelist, Shadford. In 1775 and 1776, while the whole country was seething and sometimes boiling over with revolutionary wrath, no greater proof than this could be desired that the Lord was in the word as preached by His itinerant ministers. The centre of this revival was the famous old Brunswick Circuit, to which Shadford was appointed at the Conference of 1775. It comprised fourteen counties in the south-eastern part of Virginia, and extended over into Bute and Halifax counties, in North Carolina.

On his arrival Shadford found about eight hundred members in the Societies of his circuit, who, however, were very poorly organized; his first care therefore was to reform the classes, appoint proper leaders, and see that all the preachers who shared the circuit with him met their congregations in class at the close of every public service, in true Wesleyan fashion. The fruit of this labour was apparent in the rapid growth of the people in religious knowledge, and soon the whole circuit was in a glow of revival.

Among Shadford's chief friends and helpers in this great circuit was the Rev. Mr. Jarratt, a parish clergyman of the Episcopal, or English, Church, as it was then called, in

Dinwiddie County, Virginia. He was a thoroughly evangelical man, an admirer of Methodism, a believer in the Wesleyan views of the doctrines of Regeneration, Free Grace, and Entire Sanctification ; in all of which respects he was a notable exception to the clergy of his order who claimed to represent “the Church” in America. This good man entered heartily into the revival work, organized classes among his own people, ranged the country, preaching in all directions, while his own church was in constant use for revival meetings, and his house was a home for the homeless itinerants, in whose success he had the grace to rejoice.

Mr. Rankin, who went down to visit his brethren on the Brunswick Circuit during the height of the revival, gives the following account of a Sunday which he spent with Shadford :—

“We went to the chapel at ten, where I had liberty of mind and strength of body beyond my expectation. After preaching I met the Society, and was more relieved both in body and mind. At four in the afternoon I preached again, from ‘I set before thee an open door, and no man can shut it.’ I had gone through about two-thirds of my discourse, and was bringing the words home to the present *now*, when such power descended, that hundreds fell to the ground, and the house seemed to shake with the presence of God. The chapel was full of white and black, and many were without, that could not get in. Look wherever we would we saw nothing but streaming eyes and faces bathed in tears, and heard nothing but groans and strong cries after God and the Lord Jesus Christ. My voice was drowned amid the groans and prayers of the congregation. I then sat down in the pulpit, and both Mr. S. and I were so filled with the divine presence that we could only say, ‘This is none other but the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven!’ Husbands were inviting their wives to go to heaven; wives their husbands; parents their children, and children their parents; brothers their sisters, and sisters their brothers. In short, those who were happy in God themselves were for bringing all their friends to Him in their arms. This mighty effusion of the Spirit continued for above an hour; in which time many were awakened, some found peace with God, and

others His pure love. We attempted to speak or sing again ; but no sooner had we begun than our voices were drowned. It was with much difficulty that we at last persuaded the people, as night drew on, to retire to their own homes."

Rankin also attended one of Shadford's quarterly meetings, of which he says :—

"No chapel or preaching-house in Virginia would have contained one-third of the congregation. Our friends, knowing this, had contrived to shade with boughs of trees a space that would contain two or three thousand persons. Under this, fully screened from the rays of the sun, we held our general lovefeast. It began between eight and nine on Wednesday morning, and continued till noon. Many testified that they had 'redemption through the blood' of Jesus, 'even the forgiveness of sins.' And many were able to declare that it had 'cleansed' them 'from all sin.' So clear, so full, so strong was their testimony, that while some were speaking their experience, hundreds were in tears, and others vehemently crying to God for pardon or holiness.

"About eight our watch-night began. Mr. J. [supposed to be Pastor Jarratt] preached an excellent sermon ; the rest of the preachers exhorted and prayed with divine energy. Surely, for the work wrought on these two days many will praise God to all eternity."

It was recorded as a remarkable fact that "many children from eight to ten years old are now under strong convictions, and some of them are savingly converted to God ;" a hint at the prevailing notion among Christians of those times that it was out of the mouths of grown-up people only that the Lord could have any perfect praise.

This great awakening continued for about two years, and its fruits were sound and substantial.

Writing in September, 1776, Jarratt says : "If you ask, 'How stands the case now with those that have been the subjects of the late work?' I have the pleasure to inform you I have not heard of any one apostate yet. Upon the whole, things are in as flourishing a condition as can reasonably be expected, considering what great numbers, of various capacities and stations, have lately been added to the Societies."

On making up his statistics for the Conference of 1776, Shadford found that the membership of the Brunswick Circuit was 2,666, an increase of over 1,800 in a single year. Thus, in spite of the political clamour and confusion which sorely crippled other communions, American Methodism gained this year an increase in membership of 1,873.

As the war-cloud grew darker, the position of the itinerants became more perilous. Danger could not frighten them from their work, but the law now began to place insurmountable obstacles in their path. In Maryland, for example, a test oath was ordered to be administered to all doubtful persons ; which oath was a pledge to take up arms in aid of the Revolution, if called to do so by the colonial authorities. Of course such oaths were not for the clergy ; but the itinerants were not “clergymen ;” they were only “preachers ;” and here was a convenient cudgel with which to belabour them. Whatever may have been the personal politics of Asbury, he had not come to America to shoot men, but to save them ; and therefore, after being denounced as an Englishman, and escaping the death intended for him by some active Revolutionist, who put a bullet through his chaise, but failed to reach its occupant, he took his departure for the colony of Delaware, where the test oath was not so rigidly enforced.

But even here there was a “Light Horse Patrol,” which, in the name of Liberty, practised a good deal of petty tyranny. In April, 1778, a band of this revolutionary police came to the house of the Hon. Thomas White, Judge of the Court of Common Pleas of the County of Kent, seized him, and carried him off to jail under the charge of being a Methodist ! It was on the plantation of this same Methodist judge that Asbury had been forced to take refuge from his enemies, who, if they had known what prey was concealed in that little cabin, hidden among the shrubbery beyond the orchard, might have made another notable capture in the name of liberty.

For five weeks the judge was held a prisoner ; prayers being offered night and day for his safety by his godly household, whose devotions were led by the man of all others whom the patriots now wished to capture, or else

to drive out of the country. When his trial came on, his wife conducted his defence ; perhaps for the reason that no lawyer could be found to do it ; and so admirably did she plead her cause, that her husband and client was "acquitted," though he was unquestionably guilty of the offence charged against him.

Meanwhile the search for the hated British Methodist was kept up by the patriot patrol, who sometimes used violence as well as vigilance ; it therefore became the part of discretion—valour was out of the question—for Asbury to flee from this place of concealment, lest his friends should have their house burned over their heads by this irresponsible mob on suspicion that the "Tory preacher" might be hidden in it. This he did ; and like a runaway negro, a fugitive from injustice, he took to the woods and swamps, and it was nearly a month before he ventured to return. During this time he found shelter in the rude cabin of a friendly backwoodsman ; and he mentions also that in these thirty or forty days in the wilderness his soul was blessed with very precious manifestations of divine love.

Although a recluse, Asbury was the chief of the itinerant Gospel band. One by one, or two by two, they visited him, keeping him informed of the progress of the work, which he continued to direct by letters. In 1779 he ventured to hold a Conference at the Judge's mansion ; but for a time such was the storm of patriotic persecution, that he could only leave his wood-embowered cottage by night ; and this he did, going from house to house in the darkness, and preaching the Gospel, which was as a fire shut up in his bones.

The inglorious flight of Rodda in 1777, made necessary by his too ardent service of King George, and the more dignified departure of Rankin, who could not keep pace with events, left only two of the English brethren in the field, Asbury and Shadford. It appears that these two men had hoped to weather the storm ; but it was now evident that the patriots were bent on driving out of the country, or else out of the world, every man of any consequence who would not swear allegiance to their ideas of liberty. At last Shadford's British heart failed him, and he sought out his only remaining Wesleyan co-patriot, into whose hands

the care of all the Societies had fallen, for the purpose of taking a survey of the situation.

It was a discouraging situation enough. Two of the three chief points which had determined the geographical position of the Methodist circle were blotted out. It was no longer possible to supply the New York and Philadelphia pulpits with members of the Conference; Norfolk, Va., had been abandoned; the country was full of bands of armed men—soldiers, patrols, bushwhackers fighting on their own hook—all of whom had a strong prejudice against men of their profession. The Americans were still divided into Whigs and Tories; for the fate of the revolution still hung in even scale; and thus, in spite of their determination to let all politics alone, and attend only to the ministry of the word, the preachers stood between two fires. What was to be done? As the last and proper resort they appealed the case to Heaven, and separated to spend a day in solemn fasting and prayer.

It was no light occasion that brought Asbury and Shadford to their knees to inquire of the Lord whether they should or should not abandon their work. Shadford had suffered, as well as his chief. He had been threatened with imprisonment in Virginia, and, after a year and a half of remarkable usefulness, he left it for the North in the depth of winter. On his route he was lost in the woods at night, when the weather was intensely cold and the snow a foot deep. He could discover no house; without relief he must perish. He fell upon his knees and prayed for deliverance. On rising he stood some time listening, when he heard the distant barking of a dog. Following the sound, he was welcomed at the house of a plantation. Thus saved, he hastened into Maryland; but there also he was required to renounce his loyalty, or be in peril of imprisonment, if not death. He could not travel without a pass, nor have a pass without taking the oaths.

In the evening of this solemn day of decision Shadford rejoined his chief, and inquired what conclusion he had reached.

"I do not see my way clear to go to England," responded the steadfast Asbury.

Shadford replied, "My work here is done; I cannot stay; it is as strongly impressed on my mind that I ought to go home, as it was at first that I ought to come to America."

"Then one of us must be under a delusion," rejoined Asbury.

"Not so," said Shadford; "I may have a call to go, and you to stay."

"I believe," adds Shadford, "we both obeyed the call of Providence. We saw we must part, though we loved as David and Jonathan. And, indeed, these times made us love one another in a peculiar manner. O how glad were we to meet and pour our griefs into each other's bosom!"

Shadford managed to obtain a pass from the military authorities to go to the North, and at once set out across the country for Philadelphia. That night he was attacked by an armed man on the highway, who presented a musket at his breast, threatening his life. He and a companion were allowed at last to proceed, but found that the bridge at Chester was broken down. "With our saddle-bags upon our backs," he says, "we crept on our hands and knees on a narrow plank of that part of the great bridge that remained standing, and got our horses over the next morning. Thus, through the mercy and goodness of God, we got safe into Chester that night, and the next night into Philadelphia. Here we met three or four of our preachers, who, like ourselves, were refugees. I continued near six weeks before I got a passage, and then embarked for Cork in Ireland; from thence to Wales, and then across to Bristol."

Shadford then resumed his ministry in England, and laboured with his characteristic ardour till 1791, when, after twenty-three years of itinerant life, his infirm health required him to take a supernumerary relation to the Conference, and in 1816 he died in great triumph, in the seventy-eighth year of his age.

"So we are left alone," writes Asbury; "but I leave myself in the hand of God, relying on His good providence to direct and protect, persuaded that nothing will befall me but what shall conduce to His glory and my benefit." But if "left alone" by the Wesleyan missionaries, Methodism in America had been planted by rivers of waters, and was

already bearing fruit abundantly, while a band of faithful and efficient "Helpers," as Wesley called his preachers of the rank and file, were already in the field, who, in spite of all their enemies, were holding most of the ground they had so painfully and faithfully won.

The hearts of the preachers now turned with one accord to Asbury as the man to lead them out of this wilderness of war. He was by far the ablest and most experienced man among them; had been duly appointed by Wesley as "General Assistant for America;" had shown a much better understanding of the colonial situation and the colonial temper than Rankin, who was too good a Scotchman to be a good American: and now that he had chosen their people for his people, as well as their God for his God, the native-born preachers, into whose untried but not unskilful hands so great a work had fallen, rallied around their chief, who thenceforth became to them a Joshua: the personal leadership of their English Moses having substantially ended with the arrival in America of his unfortunate Calm Address.

In this enforced seclusion of nearly two years, Asbury gained some distinguished friends; among them Richard Bassett, of Dover, whose country-seat at Bohemia Manor, and its old "Bethesda Chapel," came to be very familiar to the itinerants; the one for its warm hospitality, the other for the displays of divine power and glory therein. The high position of Judge Bassett, who was a member of the Convention which formed the Constitution of the new nation, a Senator in Congress, and afterward Governor, was such that he was able to render his itinerant brethren valuable assistance. A letter from Asbury to Rankin had also fallen into the hands of some American officers, wherein was abundant evidence of the love of the writer for the people of his adopted country, and his expectation of seeing it an independent nation. Thus the Governor of Maryland was persuaded that Asbury and the men under his command were in no wise dangerous to the progress of "free institutions," and the preachers were presently allowed to travel their circuits without further magisterial hindrance; though they still had to contend with infidelity, which, from first to last, was a prominent factor in the working of the war, and

which still gave them frequent tastes of ruffianism which kept their mission from losing the excitement of danger.

Another honoured name is that of the Rev. Dr. M'Gaw, one of the friends of Asbury in his retirement, and soon afterward called to be rector of St. Paul's Episcopal Church in Philadelphia. This clergyman, and the excellent Virginia rector, Jarratt, stand as points of admiration in the history of the English Church in America ; shining illustrations, like Fletcher, Perronet, Grimshaw, and Venn, in England, of how good and how pleasant a thing it is for Methodists and Episcopalians, brethren of the same blood, to dwell together in harmony, if not in unity.

CHAPTER XV.

A CHURCH FOR THE NEW NATION.

THAT long-drawn misery, called the War of the Revolution, wore itself out in 1782, though peace was not formally declared until 1783.

It had been a period of sin as well as of misery, for colonial piety was compelled to wait until colonial Liberty had settled her quarrel: thus iniquity abounded, and the love of many waxed cold. The doctrines of the patriots implied the largest faith in man, but they did not always imply any considerable faith in God, the hottest republicanism and the coldest infidelity being often found in the same mind. Washington knew how to pray, but in this, as in many other things, he was an exceptional soldier, while, as is well known, the opening of the first American Congress with prayer was on account of the unexpected presence of a clergyman, and not according to any previous plan.

It is doubtful if the colonies could have achieved their independence while they were so young and weak without the aid of France, who, besides sending a few troops to their assistance, kept the common enemy busy on the other side of the water. But along with French sympathy came French philosophy, whose teachings accorded well with the lawlessness and licence which war always brings. Voltaire, the great French apostle in politics, literature, and irreligion, was a more agreeable teacher than Jesus. The one preached death as the end of all things to a sinner, while the other announced the unwelcome fact of a future perdition for ungodly men.

Besides, it was no small trial to the faith and patience of the sturdy colonists to have their two chief cities, New York

and Philadelphia, garrisoned by the enemy ; to be challenged by red-coated sentinels as they walked their own streets ; and to hold their lives and property subject to the caprice of some British officer sent out to chastise them into submission. As for New England, its people were too mad to be very religious—Puritanism had always a terrible temper when fully aroused ; the South never was very devout ; having for the most part nothing but the official forms of godliness ; and during those gloomy years the only vigorous life among any body of believers was among the much-abused Methodists, who, though subject to every species of indignity at the hands of magistrates, soldiers, and ruffians, resolutely persisted in preaching the Gospel, which preaching the Lord accompanied with signal displays of His grace.

During the last half of the war-period, Asbury, having outlived the suspicions of the patriots, was permitted to resume his place as the general of the itinerant forces, in which he displayed abilities of the highest order: patience, persistence, indifference to personal sufferings, the power of combination and systematic arrangement, and a consummate judgment of men: just those qualities which the situation demanded in a pioneer bishop who was called upon to manage a diocese reaching from Jersey to Florida, from the coast to the Alleghanies, and over them ; some portions of which were occupied by hostile armies, and the whole of it suffering from the poverty and commotion produced by a long and exasperating civil war.

There is no other hero in America with whom to measure Asbury, except the otherwise incomparable Washington. A careful study of these two leaders will show a striking similarity between them ; each pre-eminent in his own field, and each honoured above the other according as the individual student of their character and career is moved to give precedence to Church or State, to patriotism or piety.

As soon as it was possible Asbury organised the whole Methodist work into one great circuit, which, with incredible toil, and in spite of frequent illness, he compassed once, and sometimes twice, a year. The reader of his Journals is bewildered with the rapidity of his movements ; but through them all the tireless, invincible apostle appears, planning

grandly and as grandly executing his plans; raising up hosts of preachers; forming new Churches, new Circuits, and new Conferences; extending his denomination to all points of the compass, till it becomes before his death co-extensive with the nation.

He traversed the wilderness of the South and West, sometimes being compelled to use two horses, because no one beast could carry a man all day over the wretched bridle-paths and across the mountain torrents, often incapable of ferriage and almost always wanting a bridge. On one occasion he says:—

"We set out for Crump's, over rocks, hills, creeks, and pathless woods. The young man with me was heartless before we had travelled a mile: but when he saw how I could bush it, and sometimes force my way through a thicket, and make the young saplings bend before me, and twist and turn out of the way or path, for there was no road, he took courage. With great difficulty we came into the settlement about two o'clock, after travelling eight or nine hours; the people looking almost as wild as the deer in the woods. I have only time to pray, and write in my Journal; always upon the wing; as the rides are so long and the roads so bad, it takes me many hours, for in general I walk my horses.

"I crossed Rocky River about ten miles from Haw River. It was rocky, sure enough. I can see little else but cabins in these parts, built with poles. I crossed Deep River in a ferry-boat, and the poor ferry-man swore because I had not a shilling to give him."

It was just this Herculean labour so sagaciously bestowed that preserved the unity of the scattered Societies. Asbury was everywhere. Was there a dispute among the preachers at the South, over their rights to administer the sacraments? he was at hand with cautious counsels to prevent an open break with Mr. Wesley. Was a poor itinerant in trouble with the authorities? he was ready with his personal influence to protect him, or with his purse to pay his iniquitous fine. Was there a man posted in an almost inaccessible region among the mountains? he was sure to pay a visit to the outpost, and cheer the lonely sentinel with

his wise and loving words. Was there a little band of adventurous spirits planting themselves in the wilderness far beyond the lines of the frontier? Asbury was sure to hear of them, and to run his ever-extending circuit-lines so as to take them in. His was the mind that planted the Methodist organization in America, and put and kept it in working order, till, at the close of the war, when other branches of the church militant were more or less demoralized, his little band of veterans, seasoned with hard campaigning, and flushed with constant victory in the name of the Lord, were ready for a fresh and immediate advance all along the line; and it was just this mighty onset, at the time when other churches were rallying and recruiting, that gave to Methodism the foremost place among the Christian communions of the New World.

An ordained Wesleyan ministry was now the special demand of the American Methodists, who had, with great difficulty, been prevented from setting up an independent ministry for themselves. The Conference of 1780, held in Baltimore, determined, after much debate, to "continue in close communion with the American section of the English Church," relying upon the "friendly clergy" thereof for the administration of the sacraments; the Methodists having, as yet, not a single ordained minister among them. But America was now, in 1784, a nation by itself, and the active and growing Societies could not be persuaded to remain in "close communion," or in any communion whatever, with a Church which was part and parcel of a foreign and recently hostile State. Something must be done that the fifteen thousand Methodists in America might no longer be defrauded of their rights and privileges as members of the Church of God; and also that the eighty itinerant ministers might be permitted to attain that rank in the Church to which the providence of God had appointed them, and which they had so heroically earned.

During the Revolution the American Methodists had rapidly multiplied. At the Conference of 1784 their numbers were reported at 14,988, with eighty-three itinerant preachers, besides several hundred local preachers. Like their brethren in England, they had hitherto regarded themselves as

in some way related to the English Church, as it was then represented in America. But the "friendly clergy of the Church of England," to whom the Conference had voted to look for the administration of the sacraments, had now nearly all departed for England, and a large number of the Episcopal churches had perished during the war. In Virginia, twenty-three out of ninety-five parishes were extinct or forsaken; and of the remaining seventy-two, thirty-four were destitute of pastors; while of her ninety-eight clergymen, only twenty-eight remained. This, however, was a small misfortune; for the Rev. Mr. Jarratt, himself a clergyman of the Church of England, declares that "most of the clergy preached what was little better than Deism," and were bitter revilers and persecutors of those who preached the truth.*

Under these circumstances the Methodists sought to cut themselves loose from their churchly leading-strings, and began to demand of their preachers the administration of the sacraments. Many of the Societies had been months, some of them years, without these sacred ordinances. Five years before this, in 1779, the preachers in the South proceeded to ordain themselves by the hands of three of their senior members, unwilling that their people should longer be denied the Lord's Supper, and their children and probationary members the rite of baptism. Asbury was greatly annoyed at this, and a year afterward with difficulty succeeded in persuading them to suspend the administration of the sacraments till further advice could be received from Wesley. Asbury wrote to Wesley, telling him of the greatness of the work, and of the division that had taken place in Virginia on account of the people's uneasiness respecting the sacraments. Thousands of their children were unbaptized, and the members of the Societies in general had not partaken of the Lord's Supper for many years; some of them never. For these urgent reasons he implored Mr. Wesley to send out an *ordained* minister to America, who could supply this painful lack of service.

With the new nation came the necessity for the establishment of a new section of the Church. In this emergency,

* Tyerman's "Life and Times of Wesley."

Mr. Wesley, having exhausted his last hope of aid from the English prelates, fell back upon the rights which, as he believed, were vested in him by the apostolic constitution, by the constitution of the Church of England, and also by the immediate providence and grace of God, and prepared to set up the form and order of the Catholic and Apostolic Church, as he understood it, for the government and fellowship of his spiritual children in the United States and Canada. Accordingly he ordained Dr. Coke, his most distinguished assistant and his most trusted friend, as "Superintendent of the Methodist Societies in America,"* and sent him out thus accredited to ordain Francis Asbury to a like office, and thus establish the episcopal form of Church government among the Methodists of the New World.

Although the life and labours of Dr. Coke enter so largely into the history of British Methodism, and especially into the history of British Wesleyan missions, yet, as the first Bishop of the Methodist Episcopal Church, his biography belongs, in a special sense, to the history of Methodism in America.

Since his advent among the British Methodists in 1778, Dr. Coke had been, next to John Wesley, the most prominent leader among them. He was a man full of faith and of the Holy Ghost. He was rich, and could travel at his own expense; he was a scholar, and would give additional dignity to the little Conference in America; he was a man of great personal power and magnetism; and last, though not least, as Mr. Wesley regarded it, he was a presbyter in the Church of England.

The first meeting between Wesley and Coke occurred at the village of Kingston, near Taunton, in August, 1776, at

* This was not an ordination to the Christian ministry, for Dr. Coke was already ordained; but an ordination to a special work—that of superintending the churches of America, and of ordaining ministers for them. Nor was the Methodist Episcopacy in America intended to be a distinct order like that of bishops in the Church of England. In this latter sense Mr. Wesley was not himself a bishop, but he believed that he was in the New Testament sense, and could therefore ordain others to the office. And he was right. But bishops in the Methodist Church of America, though as a matter of order they ordain, and possess special powers of government, yet they are only presbyters, and first among equals. Hence representatives from the British to the American Conferences, though not called bishops, have often taken part in the ordination of young men to the ministry.

which date Wesley was a venerable man of seventy-three. Coke was a young presbyter of the Church of England, and curate of the parish of South Petherton. He was already a genuine Methodist, though he had never attended a Methodist meeting; he was therefore prepared to be captivated at once by the spirit and genius of Wesley, to whom, as will shortly be seen, he presently attached himself as a son and helper in the Gospel.

Thomas Coke was born in the village of Brecon, in Wales, on the 9th of September, 1747. His father was an influential gentleman, a surgeon by profession, who was several times mayor of Brecon; and Thomas, being an only child, the most liberal plans were laid out for his education, which, on the death of his father, were carried out by his excellent mother, who lived to see him become Mr. Wesley's chief assistant, and to become herself a member of the Methodist Society at Bristol.

At the age of sixteen, the young man was entered as a gentleman commoner at Jesus College, Oxford. Here he was at first disgusted with the licentiousness which prevailed among the students; but at length his mind became tainted with their infidel notions, and being a lively, handsome young fellow, fond of cards, dancing, and other pleasures of fashionable society, he was far along on the road to ruin before his conscience could bring him to a stand.

At length, in spite of his infidel notions, the faith of his childhood began to torment him with forebodings of the future, which he was not able to shake off. While in this wretched state of mind he paid a visit to a Welsh clergyman, who, when Sunday came, preached a brilliant and powerful sermon, which so affected the young student, that on their way home from church he opened his heart to the minister, praised his discourse, confessed that it had driven him from his refuge of lies, and begged to be further instructed in things pertaining to the kingdom of God; but what was his amazement when the minister laughingly assured him that “it was only a sermon,” and that he himself did not believe that kind of doctrine, but preached it simply because it was the thing required of him as a clergyman of an orthodox Church!

The young Oxonian was now in deeper trouble than ever; his struggles between faith and doubt became more and more desperate, till some of the writings of Bishop Sherlock came in his way. These settled his mind in favour of the orthodox views, and led him to forsake his wild companions at college, and turn his thoughts to the holy office. But there were more candidates than "livings," and young Coke, after waiting several years for an eligible opening, during which time he took his Oxford degree of Doctor of Civil Law, was glad to accept the curacy of South Petherton, in Somersetshire, where he soon became unpleasantly distinguished as a zealous country parson.

Hitherto he was a Christian only in doctrine: of the experience of saving grace, like the great majority of the clergy, he knew nothing at all. He believed in the Bible, the Prayer-book, and the Catechism; Fletcher's "Checks to Antinomianism" had cured him of the predestinarian views in which he had been trained at home, and filled his mind and heart with the evangelical doctrines, which he preached with all his might—preached them sometimes without a manuscript, after the manner of the Methodists—preached them from house to house, among the aged and the sick, who could not, and among the indifferent and vicious, who would not, join the crowds who attended his ministry at the parish church. These efforts for the actual salvation of actual sinners made him obnoxious both to the easy-going clergy and the wordly-minded laity of his region of country, among whom he soon began to be denounced as a "Methodist"—a word which, in those days, was synonymous with our word "fanatic," and which was applied to any one who was very much in earnest about spiritual and eternal things, no matter what might be his peculiar doctrinal views.

In one of the Doctor's visits to a friend in Devonshire he discovered a genuine Methodist, the first he had ever seen. He was a simple-hearted man, employed on his friend's estate; the leader of a little class; learned in nothing but the Scriptures, and wise only in matters of Christian experience. The two men talked and prayed together a good deal during the Doctor's visit, and it was to this godly peasant more than to any other person that Coke declared himsel

indebted for leading him into the experience of religion. On returning from this visit he preached more like a Methodist than ever, and on one occasion, while speaking in his own pulpit, the power of God came down upon him, filling his soul with unspeakable joy. This blessed experience he announced to his people, and at his first sermon after that happy event three souls were awakened under the word.

The parish was now in a ferment. The genteel portion were offended at his zeal, the impenitent at his severity; while those who had relied on their outward morality for salvation were disgusted to hear that, without being born again, even they could not enter the kingdom of God. The neighbouring clergy were displeased because Dr. Coke drew away their congregations, and the choir of the parish church were wounded in their vanity because the curate had introduced the singing of hymns by the congregation, instead of leaving all the praise and glory of the music to them. The Bishop of the diocese was appealed to, to correct this irregular man, but he found nothing in him worthy of punishment. At length his enemies, having no other resort, persuaded the rector of the parish to dismiss his troublesome curate, which was hastily done in public, without giving him any notice and to make his disgrace more terrible, the bells of the church were rung as he passed out of the door. But years afterwards they rang him in again, when on a visit to the scene of their disgrace—not his—the rejected curate was hailed as one of the chief Methodists, as well as one of the chief men of his times.

For many years the Doctor was a whole missionary society in himself; the earliest and one of the most efficient that ever existed. This was an office in which to win immortal honour below and eternal glory above, but one which subjected him to no small discourtesy, hardship, criticism, and even abuse. The Church of that day, with the exception of the German Moravians, was sound asleep so far as the duty of foreign missions was concerned; and it was a thankless as well as difficult task to awaken it from its comfortable lethargy. Even in the ranks of the Methodists, missions were by no means so popular as at present, and Dr. Coke was compelled to beg from house to house the funds which

his schemes required ; a process requiring, at that time, an indescribable amount of patience and courage, and one which made him anything but a popular man. By some good people he was laughed at for intermeddling with Divine providence ; by others he was coolly thrust aside as a nuisance ; but none of these things moved him, or in the least abated his missionary zeal : his time, his fortune, and his life had, once for all, been laid upon this altar, and God had doubtless accepted the sacrifice. The matter therefore was fixed and final.

In the latter part of his career, Dr. Coke's hands were strengthened, and his resources increased, in a somewhat romantic manner. During the year 1805, word was brought to him that there was a wealthy and benevolent lady, Miss Penelope Goulding Smith, staying at the Hot Wells, in Bristol, for her health, and without loss of time he paid her a missionary call. His plans so interested the lady, that she promised him a contribution of a hundred guineas if he would call upon her on her return to her home, at Bradford, in Wiltshire ; and when in due time he presented himself to collect the subscription, the lady gave him two hundred guineas instead of one hundred, so deep an impression had he produced upon her mind.

This was the beginning of a friendship which in the following year ripened into matrimony, whereby the Doctor gained an estimable and pious helpmeet, a life-member to his individual missionary society, and an additional fortune to aid him in spreading the Gospel among the heathen at home and abroad.

Previous to her marriage the lady had led a very secluded life, but for the love of her missionary husband, whose work compelled him to spend much of his time on the road, she gave up her quiet mansion for a great travelling carriage, in which this devoted couple may almost be said to have resided for four out of the six years of their wedded life. Having now no fixed dwelling-place, the Doctor's choice books and papers were stowed in the carriage, as well as the more strictly personal baggage of the two travellers ; and in this four-wheeled office the first Missionary Society transacted its business, planned its campaigns, and kept itself before the public.

The arrival of this compact and somewhat complex expedition at the house of the hospitable Methodists along the Doctor's routes, where he was wont to halt for dinner, supper, or lodgings, was quite a notable event; amusing, indeed, in some of its aspects, though none the less memorable on that account. To unload the ample vehicle of its multifarious contents required the united services of the entire household; a task which nothing but the dignity, heroism, and self-forgetfulness of the distinguished passengers could render very agreeable. Then the lady was not in firm health, neither was she fond of travel, nor yet of making acquaintance of strangers; thus it was with some considerable embarrassment that this itinerating missionary head-quarters made its yearly rounds; while the moneys paid into its treasury were, for a time, more than equalled by those bestowed and expended by the occupant of the office itself.

On the 25th of January, 1811, Mrs. Coke departed from this missionary life, in the forty-ninth year of her age. During her brief and happy wifehood she devoted her fortune, comfort, time, soul, and body to her glorious husband and to the mission on which the Lord had sent him. Cheerfully she endured a life which, to a person of her quiet tastes and retiring disposition, would otherwise have been insufferable; but four years of such vagabond discomfort literally wore out the life of this modest, devoted gentlewoman, and among the list of the noble army of missionary martyrs her name deserves an honourable place.

Next in importance to his official relation with the Methodists of America, which will be considered in its place, was Dr. Coke's connection with the Irish Conference. In 1782, Mr. Wesley directed him to convene the Irish preachers at Dublin, and to preside, as his representative, over their assembly. So well pleased were they with his management of their affairs, which hitherto had been part and parcel of Mr. Wesley's English Conference work, that they petitioned for his reappointment. For nearly thirty years Dr. Coke presided at the annual sessions of the Irish Conference, and to the force of his character and the wisdom of his measures the Methodism of Ireland is largely indebted for its present flourishing condition.

In 1805, Dr. Coke, who had been elected President of the British Wesleyan Conference, astonished that body by bringing forward a scheme for the evangelization of neglected portions of England and Wales. Methodism itself was a grand missionary society, and some of the preachers regarded it as sufficient; but Dr. Coke had travelled over the country, and knew it better than any other man in England, and therefore he was permitted to inaugurate his plan, especially as he would be obliged to find his own missionaries, and gather or furnish his own supplies.

The war with France had resulted in the capture of about seventy thousand French prisoners, who were distributed in barracks and prison ships in different parts of the kingdom. The wretched condition of these men excited the sympathy of Dr. Coke, who at the Conference of 1811 proposed a system of missions among them. The Conference admitted the excellence of the design, but excused itself on account of the lack of funds. This objection Coke overruled by pledging the entire expense of the mission from his own private fortune; and having a number of men at command who could preach in the French language, the work was at once commenced.

These missionaries were well received by the captive Frenchmen, who thus gained a knowledge of divine truth, which was quite out of the usual line of a soldier's acquirements. Bibles were also distributed among them; and when these favoured prisoners were exchanged, they carried home with them quite a different idea of English religion from that which most Frenchmen held, and of which their views were not the most favourable, being learned by the thrusts of British bayonets or out of the muzzles of British muskets and cannon.

Dr. Coke's last mission was organized on a magnificent scale. In the year 1811 he married, and soon after buried, another wife, Miss Ann Loxdale, an eminent Methodist lady of Liverpool; and being again alone in the world, his heart now turned toward a far-away country, of which for years he had made frequent inquiry as a field of missionary operations.

Under date of Dublin, June 29, 1813, he writes: "I am

now dead to Europe and alive for India. God Himself has said to me, 'Go to Ceylon.' I shall bear my own expenses of course. I am studying the Portuguese language continually, and am perfectly certain I shall conquer it before I land in Ceylon."

As usual, Dr. Coke laid his plans before the Wesleyan Conference, under whose auspices his work was all performed. It was nothing less than the establishment of a system of missions in the very ends of the earth; that is to say, in the East Indies and at the Cape of Good Hope; from which, as centres of operations, he designed to evangelize South Africa, India, and the entire system of British colonies in the islands of the Indian Ocean.

"Where are the immense amounts of money to be raised to carry out this splendid scheme?" asked the Wesleyan Conference in amazement.

"I will advance the money myself to the extent of six thousand pounds," answered Dr. Coke.

Such munificence roused the spirits of his brethren; and when it was announced that the doctor proposed to lead the expedition in person, the Conference was all ablaze. They could not bear to lose such a man, but they now began to realize that he was larger than any one country, and belonged to all mankind. They therefore made arrangements to take care of the home work, which he must now place wholly in their hands; and with prayers and tears, and a goodly sum of money to lighten the heavy draft on his private purse, they sent him forth in the name of the Lord and of British Methodism to set up the standard of the cross on the other side of the world.

On the 1st of January, 1814, a fleet of thirty-three merchantmen, under convoy of four ships of the royal navy, set sail for the embryo empire, then controlled by the East India Company; having among their passengers the Missionary Bishop, Thomas Coke, and six other brave-hearted Methodists, who had caught his heroic spirit, and devoted their lives to the carrying out of his grand design.

But the leader was destined to land on fairer shores and in sunnier climes than those for which he sailed. On the morning of the 3rd of May, 1814, his servant, on going to

awaken his master, found his lifeless body lying on the floor of his cabin, where he had fallen in a fit of apoplexy ; and on the evening of the same day all that was mortal of Thomas Coke was buried in the Indian Ocean.

And what tomb could have been more appropriate ? This man, whose heart was great enough to love and to labour for all lands deserved to have a grave as spacious as the sea.

Before taking up the work of Bishop Coke in America, it will be well to follow a little further the fortunes of his bereaved band.

Although their chief had been taken away, the little band of missionaries had nothing to do but continue their voyage. On their arrival at their destination, the officers of the East India Company at Bombay gave them every assistance, not only for their personal comfort, but for the prosecution of their plans ; and at the service which they held on the first Sunday after their landing, Lord Molesworth, the military commander of the station, and a native of European descent, Mr. Salmon, were happily converted to God ; who thus by His Spirit bore witness to the heavenly mission on which these His servants had been sent.*

It would be difficult to imagine a more suitable choice than that of the man chosen by Mr. Wesley to be his envoy to the American Methodists, and to transfer to them the ministerial succession. With him he also sent Mr. Richard Whatcoat and Mr. Thomas Vasey ; the first of whom is described as "one of the saintliest men in the primitive itinerancy of Methodism. Had he been a papist, he might have been canonized."

Richard Whatcoat was born in the county of Gloucestershire, in England, on the 23rd of February, 1736. He was early the subject of religious impressions, and in his twenty-second year he experienced the power of regenerating grace. His conversion was one of those sudden and glorious transitions from darkness to light, from nature to grace, which especially distinguished the early history of Methodism ; and about three years afterward he received another special

* On the Mission in Ceylon and Continental India, see a later chapter.

baptism of the Holy Spirit, under the instructions of Mr. Mather, afterward “Superintendent” Mather.

Of this experience he says : “On the 28th of March, 1761, my soul was drawn out and engaged in a manner it never was before. Suddenly I was stripped of all but love. Now all was love, and prayer, and praise ; and in this happy state, rejoicing evermore, and in everything giving thanks, I continued for some years with little intermission or abatement, wanting nothing for soul or body more than I received from day to day.”

For eight or nine years he laboured as a class-leader in Wednesbury, Staffordshire, that portion of the “Black Country” in which, as has been seen, the Methodists suffered such fearful persecutions ; and in 1769, at the Leeds Conference, he was proposed and accepted as an itinerant preacher, in which work he was greatly blessed on circuits in England, Ireland, and Wales.

It was the desire of Dr. Coke that Whatcoat should accompany him to America ; and Shadford, who was familiar with the work in that country, urged him to consent. But lest he should go on a warfare of his own choice, Whatcoat observed a day of fasting and prayer for divine guidance ; and under what he believed to be the special direction of the Spirit of God, he offered himself for this distant service across the sea.

In 1787 Mr. Wesley desired his ordination as superintendent in America ; but the Conference, fearful lest in that case Mr. Wesley might recall Bishop Asbury, refused to elect him, and without this election, according to the precedent established by Bishop Asbury, he could not be ordained as bishop. But at the General Conference of 1800 the health of Bishop Asbury was so much impaired, in consequence of his privations and labours, that he desired the appointment of another bishop, and the choice fell upon Whatcoat ; his chief competitor being the apostle of New England Methodism, Jesse Lee. In private life he was remarkable for his entire devotion to God ; as a preacher, his discourses were plain, instructive, and highly spiritual ; as a presiding officer, he combined simplicity and dignity. Laban Clark, one of his great contemporaries, says of him, “I think I may safely say, If ever

I knew one who came up to St. James's description of a perfect man—one who bridled his tongue, and kept in subjection his whole body—that man was Richard Whatcoat."

The Rev. James Creighton, A.B., whom Mr. Wesley called to his assistance in ordaining Messrs. Whatcoat and Vasey for America, was a native of Cavan, the chief town in the county of Cavan, in the northern province of Ulster, Ireland; a student of Dublin University, and a Presbyter in the English Church, which at that time had a feeble representation in Ireland.

Bishop Kilmore, by whom he was ordained, appointed him curate at his cathedral, with strict injunction to "say nothing about faith" in his sermons. But the young man was wiser than his bishop. He had read the writings of Wesley and Fletcher, which had led him into evangelical views; and from a Methodist itinerant, preaching in a barn, he had heard a sermon which was the means of leading him to Christ, through faith in whom he found pardon and peace.

In the early days of his Christian experience, having no friend at hand to counsel him, he wrote letters to several ministers of his acquaintance; but, instead of offering him sympathy and assistance, they turned away from him as if he "were infected with a plague;" for among the ministry of the Irish Episcopal Church of that day personal faith in Christ for present salvation, and the profession of experimental religion, were regarded as the wildest fanaticism, but little removed from insanity.

He soon commenced preaching in private houses, barns, ancient ruins, and in any place where he could gather a congregation, and conversions began to occur under his ministry. This brought out a remonstrance from his fellow-clergymen, who charged him with that great crime "irregularity." But Creighton replied, "I never saw any fruits of my labour till I became irregular," and still went on with his work. Without any direct relations with the Methodists he actually became one himself, travelling a circuit of his own, and gathering his converts into societies, in true Wesleyan fashion. The presence of the Lord among the people was evidenced by a large increase in the attendance at the churches; but there was so much Methodism about the

movement, that the clergy bitterly opposed it, preferring that their churches should remain half empty rather than that they should be filled with persons who believed in "conversion."

Among the converts were some papists, whose apostasy from the Romish Church so enraged the priests, that Creighton was in great danger of his life; and his brother, who was a leader of one of the classes, was waylaid with the intention to murder him. But having received intelligence of it, he escaped his would-be murderers by taking another road. In 1781-2 Creighton extended his labours through seven of the central counties of the island in the provinces of Ulster and Leinster, during which he walked or rode about four thousand miles.

Wesley, who doubtless heard of his labours in some of his Irish tours, invited him to London in 1783; and after a second invitation he "consented to go in the strength of the Most High." During the fourteen years of his pastorate in Cavan, the community had been visibly as well as spiritually reformed, and his leave-taking of his parishioners, many of whom had been saved through his ministry, was very tender and affecting. Like all the regular clergy who joined the ranks of the itinerants, Creighton was received at once by Mr. Wesley into full membership in the Conference. He preached at City Road, administered the sacraments to the Societies in London and in the neighbouring counties, and assisted Mr. Wesley in editing his "Arminian Magazine." On the 1st of September, 1784, John Wesley, according to the custom of the English Church, assisted by the Rev. Thomas Coke and the above-named Rev. James Creighton, ordained Messrs. Whatcoat and Vasey as deacons, and on the following day as presbyters or elders. For the remainder of his life he was a steadfast Methodist, and shared in most if not all the ordinations performed by Mr. Wesley. His death occurred in 1820, in the eighty-third year of his age.*

This was all quite regular and correct, according to the principles which Mr. Wesley had repeatedly set forth; but, in addition to this, he performed a separate act of consecra-

* Sandford's "Memoirs."

tion upon Dr. Coke, as "Superintendent of the Methodist Societies in America," which office Coke was to convey to Asbury; and Coke and Asbury were to be "joint Superintendents of all the brethren in America."

The consecration of Dr. Coke as "Superintendent," when he was already a presbyter, has been the occasion of no small controversy, which it may be proper here to briefly review.*

John Wesley was not a Bishop of the Church of England, but he was a Presbyter whom God in His providence had invested with the actual powers and duties of a Bishop. He was also providentially called to an extraordinary but legitimate ordaining act; and in this latter capacity he conferred general supervisional functions and authority on Dr. Coke, under what was doubtless an "exigency of necessity," as Hooker calls it.

These are the indetical grounds on which Wesley, in his credentials to Dr. Coke, claims authority to set apart a "Superintendent" and ordain presbyters for the establishment of a church with an episcopal form and order among the Methodists of America, and these also are the grounds on which that Church, in its book of Discipline, still maintains and regulates its episcopacy.

It is true that in 1794, within a twelvemonth of his death, Coke wrote a letter to Wilberforce, saying he was willing to return most fully into the bosom of the Established Church on condition that his Royal Highness the Prince Regent and the Government would appoint him their bishop in India, which fact is quoted by Mr. Tyerman as evidence against the validity of Coke's episcopal consecration by John Wesley. But the fact has no such bearing upon the case. The success of Dr. Coke's final missionary scheme doubtless seemed to him at that time to require the co-operation of the Established Church of England. Hitherto he had been supported only by the Wesleyans, and it is an evidence of his great catholicity of spirit, as well as of his sagacity, that

* Those who care nothing for the question of Methodist "orders" will find this dull reading, but the author judges it best not wholly to omit the American view even from this English edition of his book.

he was willing to receive a confirmatory sanction from the English Church, which did not at all invalidate his Wesleyan episcopate. This letter has also been cited as evidence of the personal ambition of Dr. Coke, which unworthy motive his life-long labours and self-sacrifices sufficiently disprove. Mr. Tyerman says: "These are unpleasant facts, which we would rather have consigned to oblivion, had they not been necessary to vindicate Wesley from the huge inconsistency of ordaining a co-equal presbyter to be a bishop. Wesley meant the ceremony to be a mere formality likely to recommend his delegate to the favour of the Methodists in America: Coke, in his ambition, wished and intended it to be considered as an ordination to a bishopric."*

To this evident error concerning Mr. Wesley's intention there are two effectual replies. *First*. Dr. Coke, being a presbyter, was solemnly "set apart," or consecrated, by Wesley as "Superintendent," a proceeding which would be highly discreditable to both parties if it were intended as "a mere formality," that is to say, an imposition upon the American Methodists. This act was performed avowedly for the purpose of establishing an episcopal form of Church government for the Methodists in America; and how could such a form of Church government be based on "a mere formality likely to recommend his delegate to the favour," etc. †

Wesley also sent to the American Church three distinct forms for constituting three classes of ministers which the Church has essentially retained to the present day; the *status* of each of the three classes being indicated in the Methodist Discipline by the word "ordination" as the name for the service of constituting deacons and elders, and by the use of the word "consecration" as the name of the service whereby certain elders are "set apart" as superintendents or bishops. These forms demonstrate the intention of Wesley to establish a perpetual episcopal form of

* See note on page 250.

† On this point see "The Life of Dr. Coke," by Etheridge, p. 372. In a very able letter, addressed to Dr. Pusey, the Rev. Thomas Jackson fully vindicated Dr. Coke from the charge of ambition. Several editions of that letter were issued, but it is now very scarce.

government ; and if he thus sent authority for others to set apart men for an essentially episcopal office, how can it be doubted that he himself intended thus to consecrate Dr. Coke?

Second. The fact that Bishop Coke afterward sought other ordination has nothing to do with the question of what were Wesley's intentions in setting him apart as "Superintendent for America."

If Coke and Asbury had been content with Wesley's title of "Superintendent," it would have saved Mr. Wesley no little trouble ; but to their English ears there was a charm about the word "Bishop," though they well knew it meant nothing more than the word which their father in the Gospel had used in setting them apart for the episcopal office in America. They therefore claimed the more dignified appellation ; and, not to be unmindful of their venerable chief, they set him down also as a "Bishop" in the minutes of the American Methodists for 1784, which minutes were printed in, and published from, Mr. Wesley's bookroom in London.

Mr. Wesley's letter to Asbury in 1778 is also cited by Mr. Tyerman as evidence that Wesley did not intend to make a bishop of Dr. Coke. In that year Mr. Wesley writes :—

"But in one point, my dear brother, I am a little afraid both the doctor and you differ from me. I study to be little ; you study to be great. I creep ; you strut along. I found a school ; you a college ! nay, and call it after your own names ! Oh, beware ! do not seek to be something. Let me be nothing, and 'Christ be all in all !'

"One instance of this your greatness has given me great concern. How can you, how dare you, suffer yourself to be called bishop ! I shudder, I start at the very thought ! Men may call me a knave or a fool, a rascal, a scoundrel, and I am content ; but they shall never, by my consent, call me bishop ! For my sake, for God's sake, for Christ's sake, put a full end to all this ! Let the Presbyterians do what they please, but let the Methodists know their calling better.

"Thus, my dear Franky, I have told you all that is in my heart. And let this, when I am no more seen, bear witness how sincerely I am your affectionate friend and brother,

"JOHN WESLEY."

The sense of this letter appears on the face of it. Wesley does not say, *I am not* a bishop ; but he says, "Men shall never, by my consent, *call* me a bishop ;" and this same

self-sacrifice and humility he urges upon his “dear Franky.” For decade after decade he wielded episcopal powers, except in the single matter of performing ordinations; and at last, when it became needful, he solemnly ordained two men for America, on whom he conferred the orders of deacon and presbyter; and the other, being already a presbyter, he consecrated, and authorized to do everything in America which he himself was doing in England, though the much-abused title of “Bishop” he, for reasons of policy, as well as of humility, refrained from using. There is, then, no difficulty in understanding that John Wesley intended to do precisely what he did do, namely, to confer on Dr. Coke an additional office to that of presbyter, which, by whatever name it may be called, was a proper and historic bishopric; and this, beyond all contradiction, his providential position enabled him rightfully to do. Mr. Tyerman, in the extract above cited, accuses Dr. Coke of “ambition” in wishing to be a bishop, but in this he differs from Mr. Wesley himself, who, *after having had time to examine into the conduct of his episcopal envoy to the United States*, thus defends him and his conduct from this very charge: “I believe Dr. Coke is as free from ambition as from covetousness. He has *done* nothing rashly that I know, but he has *spoken* rashly, which he retracted the moment I spoke to him of it.”

There is also another view of the case, which commends itself to all Episcopalians, whether they be Protestant, Methodist, or Reformed; viz., Anglican Episcopacy was, in Wesley’s day, so mingled with dogmatism and muddled with politics, that it stood in the perishing need of a reinforcement fresh from heaven, and a restoration to apostolic methods and spirit. Just this reinforcement and restoration was given through the grace of God committed in pentecostal measure to John Wesley; who, if his apostolic character may be judged by the mighty works which showed themselves forth in him, was the most truly apostolic bishop ever seen in Great Britain; from whom, through Bishop Coke, the chief apostle of Christian missions in modern times, the episcopal line of the two great bodies of American Methodists descends.

CHAPTER XVI.

THE METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH.

ON the 18th of September, 1784, Bishop Coke and Elders Whatcoat and Vasey set sail for America, and on the 3rd of November landed at New York, where they were heartily welcomed by John Dickins, preacher of the New York Society.

“By some means or other,” writes Dr. Coke, “the whole country has been, as it were, expecting, and Mr. Asbury looking out for me for some time.” On the night of his arrival Coke preached in Wesley Chapel, “Old John Street;” and from New York rode to Philadelphia, where, after holding service at the Methodist Churches, and at St. Paul’s Episcopal Church, he proceeded southward, and on Sunday, the 14th of November, arrived at Barrat’s Chapel, where, he says, “In the midst of a forest I had an honourable congregation, to whom I endeavoured to set forth the Redeemer as our wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption. After the sermon, a plain, robust man came up to me in the pulpit, and kissed me. I thought it could be no other than Mr. Asbury, and I was not deceived. I administered the sacrament, after preaching, to five or six hundred communicants, and held a love-feast. It was the best season I ever knew, except one in Charlemont, in Ireland.”

After making known his mission to Mr. Asbury, it was determined to call a Conference at Baltimore, of all the Methodist preachers, on the ensuing Christmas-eve, and Freeborn Garrettson, whom Coke describes as “an excellent young man, all meekness, love, and activity,” was entrusted with the by no means easy task of bringing the preachers together.

As something more than a month must elapse before the session of the Christmas Conference, Mr. Asbury drew up a route of travel for Bishop Coke, who accordingly made a journey of about a thousand miles, visiting the Societies, preaching, baptizing, and celebrating the supper of the Lord. His coming was hailed with joy by the people, whose hearts had hungered for the sacraments of the Church, and who mourned that their children were growing up unbaptized. These, in great numbers, they now brought to receive the holy ordinance at the hands of the new Bishop, and day after day and night after night witnessed the gathering of glad disciples to celebrate the Holy Eucharist.

Harry Hosier, Asbury's negro servant, who accompanied him in his travels, was directed to accompany Bishop Coke in this his first episcopal tour. He was himself no mean specimen of a Methodist preacher. He was small in stature, perfectly black, and unable to read; nevertheless he was by some pronounced the greatest Methodist preacher in America. At different times he acted as driver for the carriage of Asbury, Coke, Whatcoat, and Garrettson, but he excelled all his masters in popularity as a preacher, sharing with them in their public services, not only in black, but also in the white congregations. Lednum, in his history, relates that on a certain occasion at Wilmington, Delaware, where Methodism had not yet become popular, a number of the citizens who had but a moderate opinion of the body came to hear Bishop Asbury. Old Asbury Chapel was at the time so full that they could not get in, and they stood outside to hear the Bishop's sermon, which, at its close, they complimented highly, saying, "If all Methodist preachers could preach like the Bishop, we should like to be constant hearers."

"That was not the Bishop, but the Bishop's servant," was the reply; for, on this occasion, as was frequently the case, the servant had taken the master's place in the pulpit. This only raised Asbury higher in their estimation; for, if the servant was such a preacher, what must the master be?

Asbury acknowledged that the best way to obtain a large congregation was to announce that Harry would preach.

But, alas ! popularity came near spoiling the poor fellow ; for, what with high compliments and lavish hospitality, he became temporarily a victim of intemperance ; but, by the help of divine grace he struggled manfully with his temptations, was restored to the divine favour, resumed his public labours, and died in the faith, at Philadelphia, about the year 1810, his body being borne to the grave by a great procession of admirers, both black and white.

Of his companion on this tour, Bishop Coke writes, under date of November 29th : " I have now had the pleasure of hearing Harry preach several times. I sometimes give notice, immediately after preaching, that in a little time he will preach to the blacks ; but the whites always stay to hear him. I really believe that he is one of the best preachers in the world—there is such an amazing power attends his word, though he cannot read ; and he is one of the humblest creatures I ever saw."

On the 17th of December all the episcopal party, except Whatcoat, arrived at Perry Hall, which Coke describes as the " most elegant house in this State ;" while Black, who opportunely arrived from Nova Scotia to take part in the approaching convocation, describes it as " the most spacious and elegant building I have seen in America." In this hospitable Methodist mansion the preliminaries of the approaching Conference were arranged, and on Friday, the 24th of December, 1784, the little company rode forth from Perry Hall to Baltimore, about eighteen miles distant, and at ten o'clock in the morning opened the General Conference in the Lovely Lane Church.

Garrettson had sped his way over twelve hundred miles in six weeks, summoning the itinerants to the Conference, preaching as he went ; and on his return found sixty out of the eighty-one ministers present. Bishop Coke, on taking the chair, presented his letters credential, and in accordance with Mr. Wesley's design, " it was agreed," says Asbury, " to form ourselves into an Episcopal Church, and to have superintendents, elders, and deacons."

Mr. Asbury declined to accept the superintendency on Mr. Wesley's appointment, unless, in addition thereto, his brethren should elect him to that office ; whereupon both

Asbury and Coke were unanimously elected, and on the second day of the session Asbury was ordained deacon by Dr. Coke, assisted by Elders Whatcoat and Vasey. On the third day, which was Sunday, Asbury was ordained elder, and on Monday he was consecrated as superintendent by Bishop Coke, his friend Otterbein, of the German Reform Church, and the elders, assisting in the solemn service. Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday were spent in enacting rules of discipline and the election of preachers to orders. It was agreed that the Liturgy which had been prepared by Mr. Wesley for the use of the American Church should be read in the congregations; and that the sacraments and ordinations should be celebrated according to the episcopal form. On Friday several deacons were ordained, and on Sunday, the second day of January, 1785, twelve elders were ordained, who had been previously ordained as deacons, and the Conference ended "in great peace and unanimity."

It is worthy of note that Mr. Wesley's plan for the Methodist Episcopal Church was adopted by the Christmas Conference without a dissenting voice; and as no essential change in its construction has since been made, it is unquestionably true, as stated by Bishop Simpson in his reply to Dean Stanley, on the occasion of the reception of the latter at St. Paul's Methodist Episcopal Church, New York, that "there is no other organization or communion on earth which so clearly and distinctly represents the mind of John Wesley as the Methodist Episcopal Church."

Of the personal appearance and character of this Conference nothing arrested the attention of Dr. Coke more than the generally youthful aspect of the preachers; "though most of them," he says, "bore marks of severe toil and hard usage." Some of them had suffered imprisonment for conscience' sake, others had been victims of mobs, and all of them had earned the title of "good soldiers of Jesus Christ."

The fact that Bishop Asbury allowed such a man as Freeborn Garrettson to be captured by his Nova Scotia brother, Black, shows that in spite of the War of the Revolution the Methodism of North America was still substantially a unit, since it is incredible on any other

supposition that Garrettson should have been spared to the British Provinces.

Until the time of the Christmas Conference the "Wesleyan Minutes" had been recognized as the law of the American Societies. In the preliminary deliberations at Perry Hall that code was revised and adapted to the new form of the American Church, and this revision, having been adopted by the Christmas Conference, was incorporated with Mr. Wesley's revised edition of the "Liturgy," which he called the "Sunday Service," and was published in 1785 as the "Discipline of the Methodist Episcopal Church."

The Liturgy was used for a few years in the principal churches, but Sabbath love-feasts and other extra services frequently crowded it out, and from being frequently omitted it at last fell into entire disuse; there being no allusion to it in the records later than 1792. Gowns and bands were also used for a time by the bishops and elders, but these in like manner passed away.

The ministry was, as yet, one family. For a considerable length of time each minister reported in Conference the amount of money he had received: if it was less than his allowance, a record was made of the amount; if it was more, the additional money was handed over to the proper steward thereof, and the aggregate excess was divided among those less fortunate, in the ratio of their several deficiencies. With a view to provide for superannuated preachers, and widows and orphans of preachers, every itinerant was required to pay an admission fee on his reception into the Conference—a sum equivalent to two dollars and sixty cents (or 10s. 10d.) in federal money, and afterward two dollars (or 8s. 4d.) annually. Out of this fund every worn-out preacher was to receive sixty-four dollars a year, "if he wanted it;" every widow, fifty-three dollars and thirty-three cents on the same condition; and every orphan child was entitled to receive, once for all, fifty-three dollars and thirty-three cents, "if required." This fund continued in operation until 1796, and in the following year it was merged in what is now known as the "Chartered Fund," incorporated in Philadelphia, from which the Conferences still receive a small annual income of from twenty to forty dollars.

The first Home Mission Fund, which was also established at the Christmas Conference, was called "A General Fund for carrying on the Holy Work of God." This was to be raised by yearly collections in the Societies, and by a quarterly one if need be; the money to be principally used for the expenses of preachers sent into new and distant fields of labour. Thus the Methodist Episcopal Church and the Methodist Missionary Society commenced their history together.

While the number of preachers in America was small, there was but one Conference held each year; but in 1779 they had so increased as to render it inconvenient to meet in one place, and from that time till 1784 two Conferences were held, one in Baltimore, and one somewhere in Virginia, though the second was considered as an adjournment of the first. The Baltimore Conference being of the longest standing, and made up of the oldest preachers, took precedence of the Virginia Conference, especially in the making of rules for the Societies. The Christmas Conference of 1784, at which the Methodist Episcopal Church was organized, was called a General Conference: the next General Conference was held in November, 1792.

The first year of the organization of the Church showed it to be in favour both with God and men. It had now eighteen thousand members, one hundred and four itinerant preachers, besides some hundreds of local preachers and exhorters, who were incessantly labouring in its service. The novelty of the methods adopted, and the scriptural simplicity of the doctrines taught, attracted the people in extraordinary multitudes, and the congregations which greeted the itinerants in their four to six weeks' circuit in chapels, barns, or groves, were the largest in the country. There were now more than sixty Methodist churches; but these were a small proportion of the regular preaching places.

CHAPTER XVII.

PROGRESS UNDER DIFFICULTIES.

DR. COKE spent five months in the country, after the Christmas Conference, travelling and preaching incessantly, and having, to him, some strange experiences in traversing the wilderness and in swimming the swollen rivers. On one occasion he was nearly drowned in a swift current, where a drift-tree had lodged against the landing-place, and where, in his efforts to remove it, his horse was swept out from under him, and the tree thrown over upon his back. In his account of the matter he says, "It was an awful time; however, through the blessing of my almighty Preserver, to whom be all the glory, I at last got my knee on the tree, which I grasped, and then soon disengaging myself, climbed up the little bank. I was now obliged to walk about a mile, shivering, before I came to a house." His horse was afterward found in the river by a negro, who presumed its rider was drowned, and therefore took possession of him, but soon after restored him to his proper owner.

The most difficult of all his labours was that in behalf of emancipation. The action of the Conference against slavery was clear and distinct. But when Coke began to exhort the wealthy members of the Methodist Societies to emancipate their slaves, he found himself face to face with a great difficulty. So unwelcome was the doctrine he preached on this subject, that he was sometimes in danger of violence, and it is said that on one occasion a Southern lady offered a crowd of ruffians fifty pounds "if they would give that little doctor a hundred lashes," but they did not conclude the bargain. On account of his labours in the interest of emancipation, he was beset by mobs, and finally arrested

by the Virginia authorities for “sedition ;” nevertheless he was quite successful. In his Journal, under date of April 12th, 1785, he says :—

“Kennon has emancipated twenty-two slaves. These are great sacrifices, for the slaves are worth, I suppose, upon an average, thirty or forty pounds sterling each, and perhaps more.”

He also mentions one “Brother Martin,” who, he says, “has done gloriously, for he has fully and immediately emancipated fifteen slaves.” This was one of the results of a notable anti-slavery sermon preached by the Bishop, which made a great sensation, and caused several other brethren besides Martin to emancipate their slaves. On the 14th of the same month he writes: “I have now done with my testimony against slavery for a time, being got into North Carolina: the laws of this State forbidding any to emancipate their negroes.”

The first Southern Conference was held by Bishop Coke at this time, at the house of a brother in North Carolina, named Hill. There were about twenty preachers present, who reported an increase in that section of nine hundred and ninety-one during the year. A preacher was sent to form a new circuit in Georgia, the whole State being given him for his range. Two men were also sent to South Carolina, in the capital of which State Mr. Asbury had been kindly received, and where, by the labours of some unknown local preacher, a society of over a hundred members had been brought together.

It is worthy of special attention, as showing the attitude of early Methodism toward slavery, that at this first Southern Conference, in 1785, a petition to the General Assembly of North Carolina was drawn up and signed by the Conference, praying that an act might be passed permitting such as desired to do so to emancipate their slaves. There was, however, a very strong opposition on the part of the friendly planters to the rules embodied in the Discipline on the subject of slavery; and Dr. Coke says: “A great many principal friends met us here to insist on a repeal of the slave rules; but when they found that we had thoughts of withdrawing ourselves entirely from the circuit on account of the

violent spirit of some leading men, they drew in their horns, and sent us a very humble letter, entreating that preachers might be appointed for their circuit."

Besides the memorial to the General Assembly of North Carolina, above mentioned, a petition was drawn up, and a copy given to every preacher, to be circulated for signatures, "entreating the General Assembly of Virginia to pass a law for the immediate or gradual emancipation of all its slaves." Bishop Coke records the hopefulness of this measure, saying, "It is to be signed by all the freeholders we can procure; and these, I believe, will not be few."

On their return from the Southern Conference in North Carolina, Bishops Coke and Asbury visited Washington, at Mount Vernon. Of this interview with the most highly honoured man in America, Coke has left the following record: "He received us very politely, and was open to access. He is quite the plain country gentleman. After dinner we desired a private interview, and opened to him the grand business on which we came, presenting to him our petition for the emancipation of the negroes, and entreating his signature, if the eminence of his station did not render it inexpedient for him to sign any petition. He informed us that he was of our sentiments, and had signified his thoughts on the subject to most of the great men of the State; that he did not see it proper to sign the petition; but if the Assembly took it into consideration, he would signify his sentiments to the Assembly by a letter. He asked us to spend the evening and lodge at his house, but our engagement at Annapolis the following day would not admit of it."

What there may have been in the position of George Washington, who, at this time, was a private citizen, holding no office, either military or civil, to prevent his signing the petition presented to him by Coke and Asbury, it is somewhat difficult to discover. It was a petition of Virginia freeholders to the General Assembly of their State, asking the passage of a law of which Washington privately declared his approbation. His proposal to write a personal letter in this interest, while at the same time he refused to sign a public petition, is more creditable to his caution than to his courage, and shows by contrast how grandly these Bishops

of the Methodist Episcopal Church stood forth at first before the other great men of their time, as the pioneers of this great movement in favour of universal liberty. Alas! that they should afterward have shrunk before the unavoidable difficulties of the question. The preachers were with them; the leading statesmen of the nation were with them; and many of the lay Methodist slaveholders were with them: but so strong was the pressure on the other side, that not many weeks after Coke had left Virginia he and Asbury conceded to the Conference in Baltimore the suspension of the rules on slavery, and they were never again fully enforced; though a decided declaration of opinion was recorded against the evil.*

On the 1st of June, 1785, Coke and Asbury met the preachers in conference at Baltimore. As Coke was to leave for Europe the next day, they prolonged their session till midnight, and early in the morning the departing bishop preached to them, taking for his text St. Paul's exhortation to the elders at Ephesus, as recorded in verses 28—38 of the twentieth chapter of the Acts of the Apostles.

On the return of Coke from America, he was attacked by Charles Wesley for his episcopal doings at Baltimore; but he vindicated himself by appealing to the authority of John Wesley, though he acknowledged that in one of his sermons at Baltimore he had used language unduly severe toward the Anglican Establishment; an offence which, in the eyes of his accuser, was scarcely to be forgiven. Charles Wesley also accused Coke of being “ambitious and rash,” in view of the fact that he had accepted from the American brethren the nominal, as well as actual, position of “Bishop.” Upon this John Wesley came to the defence of his American envoy, and replied to his brother Charles in the following words, which are commended to the attention of those who declare that Wesley did not intend that Coke and Asbury should be bishops of an Episcopal Methodism in America:—

“I believe,” says Wesley, “Dr. Coke is as free from ambition as from covetousness. He has *done* nothing rashly that I know; but he has *spoken* rashly, which he retracted

* Stevens's “History of the Methodist Episcopal Church,” vol. ii., p. 252.

the moment I spoke to him of it. . . . He is now such a right hand to me as Thomas Walsh was. If you will not or cannot help me yourself, do not hinder those who can and will."

If Wesley had not intended to confer episcopal powers upon Dr. Coke, it is incredible that he could use such strong language in defending him against the aspersions of his own brother Charles, who attacked him at this precise point. Fully sustained by Mr. Wesley, Coke resumed his missionary tours throughout the United Kingdom, preaching to great congregations, and kindling new enthusiasm among the Societies in the interest of foreign missions.

Having organized the mission work in the West Indies, Bishop Coke sailed on the 10th of February, 1787, for Charleston, S.C.

The Society here had prospered in spite of the difficulties arising from its position on the slavery question, and both whites and blacks laboured together for the erection of the new Methodist chapel; a building which, Stevens says, "accommodated fifteen hundred hearers," and which Coke describes as "worth a thousand pounds sterling," although there were only forty white persons in the Society.

Here Bishops Coke and Asbury again met and held the first Conference in the State of South Carolina, the Georgia preachers also being present. There was no riot or mob on this occasion, but peace, harmony, and joy prevailed in view of the rapid progress of the work of God.

The Conference being over, Asbury provided his brother Bishop with a good horse, and they set out together on a grand preaching tour. The roads were generally bad, the forests dense, and the swamps frequent and frightful: nevertheless, they pushed on, making in one week a distance of over three hundred miles, and preaching every day.

"The preachers," writes Coke, "ride here about a hundred miles a week; but the swamps and morasses they have to pass through it is tremendous to relate. Though it is now the month of April, I was above my knees in water on horseback in passing through a deep morass, and that when it was almost dark. . . . In travelling, our rides are so long that we are frequently on horseback till midnight."

But he delights in his adventurous ministry. “I have got,” he continues, “into my old romantic way of life; preaching in the midst of great forests, with scores and sometimes hundreds of horses tied to the trees; a sight which adds much interest to the scene.” He was surprised at the triumphant progress of Methodism in these Southern regions. “Much of the glory and of the hand of God,” he writes, “have I seen in riding through the circuit called Pedee, in South Carolina. When I was in America before, there were but twenty in Society in this circuit; and it was much doubted at the Conference whether it would be for the glory of God to send even one preacher to this part of the country. But now, chiefly by the means of two young men, Hope Hull and Jeremiah Maston, the Societies consist of eight hundred and twenty-three members; and no less than two and twenty preaching-houses have been erected in this single circuit in the course of the last year.”

When they reached Halifax County, Va., where Coke, in his former tour, was presented by the grand jury as a seditious person on account of his anti-slavery exhortations, they now received him “with perfect peace and quietness.” A rampant slaveholder, who had pursued him with a gun in order to shoot him, had been converted to God, and become a member of the Society. In Mecklenburgh County he preached to about four thousand people, the largest congregation he had ever seen in America, though “there was no town within a great many miles.” A Conference was held here in the primeval forest, and on such occasions, as well as at the minor quarterly conferences, the people came scores of miles to attend these high religious festivals.

At this Conference good news reached them from beyond the mountains. “Haw, one of our elders,” says Coke, “who last year was sent with a preacher to Kentucky, on the banks of the Ohio, near the Mississippi, wrote to us a most enlivening account of the prospect in his district, and earnestly implored some further assistance. ‘But observe,’ added he, ‘no one must be appointed for this country that is afraid to die! For there is now war with the Indians, who frequently lurk behind the trees, shoot the travellers, and then scalp them; and we have one Society on the very frontiers of the Indian

country.' After this letter was read a blessed young man (Brother Williamson) offered himself as a volunteer for this dangerous work. What can we not do or suffer when the love of Christ constrains!"

The bishops reached Baltimore on the 1st of May, at which time and place the Northern Conference for the year 1787 was held; it having been changed from its appointed date of July 24th, to accommodate Bishop Coke. At this Conference additions to the Societies were reported to the astonishing number of six thousand six hundred in a single year. No wonder Coke exulted as he beheld the glorious success of the Church, of which he was the first bishop. Two elders and eleven deacons were ordained at this Conference, and another young man offered himself as a volunteer for what was then the almost unexplored wilderness of Kentucky. From the Baltimore Conference the bishops paid a visit to New York, from which place Coke returned to Philadelphia, whence he embarked again for Europe on the 25th of June, 1787.

On Sunday, the 5th of June, 1785, Bishop Asbury, with great solemnity, laid the corner-stone of the first Methodist college in America, at Abingdon, in Maryland, about eighteen miles east of Baltimore.

The establishment of this school had been agreed upon at the Christmas Conference, and nearly £1,000 had been raised for the purpose, which in those days was a very large sum of money, and the raising of it among the Methodist Societies of that day is greatly to their honour. The name, as it is evident at first sight, belongs to the composite order, the word having been constructed for the purpose of complimenting both the American bishops in the name of the first Methodist college. The management was committed to a board of fifteen trustees; five of whom, namely, John Chalmers, Henry Willis, Nelson Reed, Richard Whatcoat, and Joseph Everett, were travelling preachers.

For a time the school prospered greatly. Its advantages, as well as the beauty of its surroundings, made Abingdon an attractive place of residence. In 1789 it was blessed with a great revival of religion; and in 1792 it reported over seventy students, who, besides the English branches, received

instruction in the French, German, Latin, Greek, and Hebrew languages.

On the 4th of December, 1795, ten years after it was opened, the college was set on fire, and burned to the ground.* Asbury, who was in Charleston, S.C., when he received the news, wrote in his Journal: “We have now a second and confirmed account that Cokesbury College is consumed to ashes, a sacrifice of £10,000 in about ten years. Its enemies may rejoice, and its friends need not mourn. If any man should give me £10,000 per year to do and suffer again what I have done for that house, I would not do it. The Lord called not Mr. Whitefield nor the Methodists to build colleges. I wished only for schools—Dr. Coke wanted a college. I feel distressed at the loss of the library.”

No ways discouraged by this severe calamity, seventeen of the principal Methodists of Baltimore met together to take measures to supply the place of Cokesbury College. One of the principal opponents of Methodism in Baltimore was a Mr. Brydon, the landlord of the Fountain Inn; the aristocratic house in those times. Merchants, army officers, and other distinguished persons, General Washington among them, were his guests. Brydon had been a barber to some of the English officers during the Revolution, and had settled in Baltimore on the conclusion of peace. He was a staunch defender of the Church of England; and by way of exhibiting his Churchmanship, he took special pains to show his contempt for the Methodists.

It was not only for the purpose of furnishing a place of fashionable amusement, but also to vex the Methodists, that Brydon built a dancing-hall next door to the Light Street Church; and when it was ready for use, he systematically held his balls and concerts on the same nights with the Methodist meetings. “It was a strange sight to look upon,” says one of the old Baltimoreans, “fiddling and dancing going on in one room, and singing and praying in the next, within hearing of each other.” In the midst of the dance a shout would sometimes be heard in the Methodist camp over the

* “Early Methodism in Baltimore.” By Rev. W. Hamilton. *Methodist Quarterly Review*, July, 1856.

conversion of a soul, or in view of some high experience related by a believer ; whereupon the dancers would break from the set, and run to the windows to ascertain the cause, indulging, doubtless, in noises of another sort, which were by no means edifying to the meeting.

But the singing and praying proved to be more than a match for the fiddling and dancing. Moreover, the conduct of Brydon began to be blamed by sensible people, who regarded the war as having secured to every one the privilege of worshipping God according to the dictates of his own conscience. The attendance at the dancing-hall waned, while that at the church increased ; and Brydon, who had expended much money on his hall of pleasure, which was the most elegant building in the town, began to be anxious to dispose of the property. His hiring some ruffians to break up one of the meetings greatly hastened his downfall ; for his guests took up the subject next morning at breakfast, and remembering that Brydon had been in the British service and that he was a Tory as well as a Churchman, they declared that his conduct was an insult to the American people ; and, packing up their effects, they left the Fountain Inn in a body.

This same dancing-hall was the building which the Baltimore Methodists purchased for an academy to succeed the ill-fated Cokesbury College. The purchase money was fifteen hundred and thirty pounds, six hundred pounds of which was raised by solicitation from house to house, after the members of the Society had subscribed seven hundred pounds among themselves ; the remaining two hundred and thirty pounds being secured in the names of the seventeen brethren who had inaugurated the movement.

But the academy was no more fortunate than the college. For awhile it was quite a popular institution, and contained at one time as many as two hundred pupils, but before the end of its first year a fire broke out in a neighbouring carpenter's shop, and both the academy and the Light Street Church were destroyed. This fire occurred on the 4th of December, 1769.

Being now alone in charge of the whole work, Asbury felt moved, if possible, to increase his already incredible

labours, and to make himself felt as much as possible throughout the length and breadth of the Church ; which length and breadth he was constantly planning to extend.

From Philadelphia, where Coke embarked for Europe on the 25th of June, 1787, Asbury made his way as far north as West Point, on the Hudson, addressing audiences sometimes numbering a thousand people in the forests, and praising God for the privilege of suffering and toiling in His name. The solitary woods through which he journeyed by rides of from twenty to fifty miles a day, were especially delightful to his soul. There are indications that he possessed a sensitive and poetic nature, which would have been more apparent in his words and work, if he had not been constantly taxed to the utmost, even beyond his strength. "In travelling thus," he says, "I suffer much from hunger and cold. O what a weariness would life be without God, and love, and labour ! I am happy in being alone, and pour out my soul to God for the whole work, and the dear people and preachers of my charge."

Southward now, again to Charleston ; where he holds a Conference, and is mobbed in the church ; the services ending in "dreadful confusion." On the evening of the same day, however, he preaches again, when the mob attack the church with stones, one of which crashes through a window, and strikes near the preacher in the pulpit. The missile, however, only helps to punctuate his discourse, which he proceeds to finish, regardless of the uproar without ; and on reviewing his experience, he remarks : "I have more liberty to preach in Charleston this visit than I ever had before, and am of opinion that God will work here, but our friends are afraid of the cross."

This rough reception in the capital of South Carolina was doubtless in consequence of the efforts in favour of the emancipation of the slaves which had distinguished the labours of Coke and Asbury in this region the previous year. He appears to have spent this winter at the South, exploring the wilderness of South Carolina and Georgia, into which a tide of emigration was pouring from the North, and where he was preparing to follow it up with the means of grace. There were already seven regular itinerants and four pro-

bationers riding their circuits in this far-away region, with whom he held a little Conference at the Forks of Broad River, on the 9th of April, 1788; at which he learned, greatly to his delight, that the seed which was sown had already sprung up. "Many," says he, "that had no religion in Virginia, have found it after their removal into Georgia and South Carolina."

He now directed his course toward the Holstein country, over the Alleghanies, the most distant region of the West known to his geography. The crossing of these mountains was no easy task, but there were souls to be saved among the straggling settlements in Eastern Tennessee and Kentucky, and therefore he, being a chief shepherd, must go and search for these scattered sheep in the wilderness.

After what he calls "an awful journey" up and down the steep and slippery trails, using his horse as a bridge for the streams, and camping at night on the floors of log cabins, soaked with the rain and shivering with cold, he reached the scene of the first Conference in the Tennessee country, at Key's Woods.

Asbury seemed to carry the whole country in his heart, and in their hearts both preachers and people carried their matchless Bishop. He was the leading and controlling spirit of the little army of itinerants who kept the Gospel sounding up and down the continent, pushing their circuits under his direction out into the wilderness, close on the track of the boldest frontiersmen. They were continually in peril of their lives, from cold and exposure, from breaking their necks on mountain precipices, from drowning in rivers which had no bridges, from being transfixed by the arrow of some skulking Indian, or dying by the hands of mobs of semi-barbarous white men who had a constitutional hatred for all ministers, more especially these; but with a courage which amounted to exultation they kept steadily at work, gladdened by the wonderful success of the word which they preached, and conscious that the eye of their heroic Bishop was watching, and his great soul planning, their campaigns, and that his toils and sufferings were often greater than their own.

Heroism is a loadstone which fails not to attract the hearts which are true as steel. On this principle it must have been

that the very difficulties and privations of the itinerants helped to fill their ranks, and to call out two or three recruits to take the place of every man that fell. They knew at the outset that they must carry their lives in their hands; but this they could do all the more easily because they had so little else to carry.

Here is a preacher on a salary of thirteen pounds a year, provided he could get so much; and if he received any more, he carried the surplus up to Conference to help out the stipends of his less fortunate brethren. Here is a preacher starting out on his way to his distant frontier circuit; he fares well enough at the Methodist taverns of Brother Jones, or Father Hayward, or Brother Smith; but having passed the last of them, he finds no other bed but the ground, and no other roof but the sky. Under these circumstances he fastens his horse, unrolls his blanket, kneels down and performs his evening devotions with a freedom and fervour which makes many an echo in the solitary woods, and then, with his saddle for a pillow, he lies down to dream of preaching great sermons, and seeing the forest full of sinners inquiring what they must do to be saved.

With break of day he springs to his feet, shivering with cold, and perhaps shaking with ague, makes his breakfast off an ear of raw corn, which he shares with his faithful four-footed companion, or a frozen turnip which he has picked up in crossing a field; or, wanting these comforts of civilized life, he gnaws the bark or the root of some shrub or tree, and having looked well to the wants of his horse, he mounts and begins his day's journey, which he enlivens from time to time with the practice of his intended sermons, or the verses of some of the grand old Methodist hymns.

A horse was indispensable to the itinerant, and the people of the circuits were expected to see that their preacher was provided with one; just as now they are expected to provide him a parsonage; that is, in case it were a well-to-do circuit, and the preacher a full member of Conference. But the probationers must find a horse for themselves, and every new candidate must present himself ready-mounted.

To the great questions of his examination, such as these, "Is this man truly converted?" "Does he know and keep

our rules?" "Can he preach acceptably?" there was added this other one, never before set down in any such catechism, "Has he a horse?"

As a specimen of the persistent search for souls in the fringes of settlements on the far side of the wilderness, Bishop M'Tyeire, of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, mentions an experience of Richmond Nolley, who, in 1812, was appointed to the Tombigbee Circuit, a wild region of country lying about three hundred and fifty miles beyond any known settlement in the South-west, and just opened up for white immigrants by the removal of the Choctaw Indians.

After camping out for eleven nights in the woods, Nolley reached the Tombigbee River, and began exploring his circuit.

One day he observed a fresh waggon-track, and being bent on finding anything that had a soul to be saved, he struck in and followed it until he came upon an emigrant family, just halted at the spot where they were intending to make their future home. The man was caring for his horses, and the woman was busy at the fire, preparing supper.

"What!" exclaimed the settler, as he heard the salutation of Nolley, "another Methodist preacher! Have you found me already? I left Virginia to get out of their reach, and went to a new settlement in Georgia, but they hunted me out, and got my wife and daughter into the Church; then I heard there was some good land down here in Choctaw Corner, and I made sure I should get clear of you by coming off, and now, a preacher comes along before I can unpack my waggon!"

"My friend," replied Nolley, "if you were to go to heaven, you would find Methodist preachers there; if you go to hell, I'm afraid you will find some of them there; and you see how it is in this world, so you had better make terms with us, and be at peace."

Like many another brave itinerant, Nolley's faithfulness and self-forgetfulness cost him his life. Cost him his life, did I say? Nay, rather, but gained him immortality and eternal life among the glorious company of the martyrs, in exchange for the toils and privations of his ministry below.

After faithful service he went up to the far-distant Conference at Baltimore, in failing health, which was the result of the severity of his work ; but the Bishop sent him back again, for thus it seemed best for the interests of the Church ; and in those days the comfort of the man was not very much considered.

His route lay across a swift, deep river, at that time much swollen with storms of rain, and clogged with floating driftwood. Its only bridge was his horse ; but the faithful animal, with an instinct of danger, refused to enter the stream. However, his master was inexorable, and in he plunged, only to be carried off his feet in an instant. Bravely he breasted the current, and at length, completely exhausted, bore his rider to the opposite shore ; but the bank was steep, and in his desperate efforts to mount it he unseated his rider, who, falling into the stream, was nearly drowned.

At length, however, Nolley reached the shore, drenched and half frozen, for the weather was cold, utterly exhausted, far from any human habitation, and night just coming on. His faithful animal was lost, and being too weak to walk, he knelt upon the ground to offer his last prayer, as it appeared to those who found his body, from the marks of his knees in the half-frozen earth : then choosing a mossy spot underneath a tree, he calmly laid himself out for death and burial. His eyes were closed, his hands folded across his breast, and a peaceful smile lingered on his cold, dead face.

The sacrifice which Asbury deliberately made of the health, the comfort, and even the lives of the preachers under his episcopal authority has been charged against him as a blot upon his administration, if not upon his character. Men will glow with enthusiasm over the brilliant manner in which some army officer leads his command to inevitable destruction, for the purpose of gaining some paltry victory of the military sort. Shall it be counted a crime against mankind that a captain of the hosts of the Lord should lead to certain death, and certain and eternal victory, the men who, when they entered this line of service, consecrated their lives as well as their time and talents to the work ?

Asbury sent no man where he was not willing to go him-

self; and if men perished under his eyes, in their efforts to save the souls of lost sinners, it was in a godly judgment a sacrifice eminently fit to be made. A Greater than Bishop Asbury has said, "He that findeth his life shall lose it; and he that loseth his life for my sake shall find it." Acting on this principle, Asbury counted the health, the strength, and the life of the ministry as the rightful, as well as the consecrated, property of the Lord Jesus Christ, to be expended with such wisdom as might be given to him, for the welfare and progress of the Church. As he understood the matter, the ministry was for the Church, and not the Church for the ministry; and the men who entered that ministry under his command knew at the outset that danger and death must not for one moment frighten them from duty.

That the Bishop himself should have lived thirty-two years after entering upon his episcopal labours, upon which he entered with feeble health and an apparently broken constitution, is one of those modern miracles which are sometimes scouted by those who declare that the age of miracles has ceased. During all this time he travelled about six thousand miles a year, much of the way on horseback, for the sufficient reason that along the roads he travelled, any other method of conveyance was impossible. He ranged incessantly from Canada to Georgia, and from the Atlantic to the ever-extending borders of civilization toward the West; riding thirty or forty miles a day, preaching, leading classes, administering sacraments, almost daily; holding frequent conferences, writing a thousand letters a year, sharing the poverty and privations of the poorest people in his great parish, without condescension or complaint; and on the other hand, enjoying the princely hospitality of the few wealthy Methodists in America, without being tempted by it into any "softness" or delay, and suffering, the greater part of his time, from rheumatism, chills, and fever, and other bodily afflictions brought on by exposure and overwork.

Bishop Asbury was a man of prayer. In his pastoral visits among the people he always prayed with them. It was his custom to pray with the families that entertained him at the close of every meal. During sessions of Conference, he prayed over each name on the list of appoint-

ments, and for years he made it a part of his duty to offer prayer daily for every one of his preachers by name, until the muster-roll of the itinerant army became so long as to be a burden to his memory.

Conferences were held during the second visit of Dr. Coke in Georgia, on the 8th of March, 1789, where 2,011 members were reported, being an increase of 784 for the year; in Charleston, South Carolina, on the 17th of March, in which State there were 3,377 members, being an increase of 907 for the year; in North Carolina at the house of a planter named M'Knight, on the Yadkin River, on the 20th of April, at which the membership in this State was reported at 6,779, being an increase of 741; and on the 18th of May, for the State of Virginia, at Petersburg, which was the second Conference ever held in that State.

On this tour Coke had further interesting experiences of itinerating in America. "Frequently," he says, "we were obliged to lodge in houses built with round logs, and open to every blast. Often we rode sixteen or eighteen miles without seeing a house or a human creature, and often were obliged to ford deep and dangerous rivers and creeks. Many times we ate nothing from seven in the morning till six in the evening, though sometimes we took our repast on stumps of trees near some spring of water."

On the 23rd of May the first New Jersey Conference was held at Trenton, in which place, for a notable exception, Methodism had been decreasing. The report showed 1,751 members in New Jersey, a decrease of 295.

The whole number of Methodists reported at the Conference of the year 1789 was 43,265, being an increase, since the Conference of the year before, a period of about eight months, of 6,111. Of the above members, 35,021 were whites; 8,241 were blacks, and three were Indians. Alas! what had become of all Mr. Wesley's delightful anticipations of building up a purer form of Christian civilization among those uncorrupted children of nature?

One of the sturdiest and most efficient of Asbury's itinerants was Thomas Ware, already mentioned in connection with the Christmas Conference; a man in whom were mingled some of the most substantial qualities of his English

and Scotch ancestry. He was born at Greenwich, New Jersey, December 19, 1758. His Presbyterian mother carefully instructed him in the Larger and Shorter Catechisms, and, what was much more to the purpose, she trained him and the rest of the children to pray.

While he was yet a child his father died, leaving his mother with eight young children to provide for; and her great sorrow in bereavement was heightened by the doubt she often indulged as to whether she was one of the elect. "She was," says her son, "harassed with fears that what she had taken for saving grace was nothing more than common grace;" a distinction which she had heard preached along with "effectual calling," and other Calvinistic inventions, by the expounders of that notable catechism of whose theology she was the victim.

About this time one of their neighbours, who had long been a member of the Church, had committed suicide in consequence of his doubts respecting his own election, which act was held to be conclusive evidence that this apparently good man had experienced nothing more than "common grace;" and the incident cast additional gloom upon the mind of Mrs. Ware, who argued from this sad circumstance the probability that she also had been "passed by" in the sovereign and eternal purposes of God's electing grace.

The gloom which rested upon the soul of his mother presently extended to her son Thomas, who was seized with a spirit of melancholy. He began to wander in lonely places, brooding over his griefs and fears; and when the two youngest of the family were taken away by death, he declares that he was troubled lest even they might not have been of the number of the elect.

About this time the Methodists began to be talked of in Greenwich, and the parish minister, fearing lest the pure minds of his people should be infected with the doctrine of Free Grace, (which was, doubtless, a damnable heresy, not being taught in the Shorter or Larger Catechism,) began to preach with additional emphasis on the Sovereignty of God, Election, Reprobation, and other such theories of doctrine as were likely to suffer damage at the hands of the itinerant preachers. However, there were two kinds of Methodists,

the followers of Wesley and of Whitefield, and it was one of the latter class who first made his appearance in Greenwich ; so that the fears of the old pastor, which had become excited by the near approach of the set of "wild, fanatical heretics," proved to be vain.

The war of the Revolution coming on, young Ware, having arrived at military age, enlisted in the patriot army ; but his soldiery duties in that slow-moving struggle left him plenty of lesiure to reflect upon his spiritual condition. The term of his enlistment was a brief one, and after its close he began the study of navigation, intending to serve his country on the sea. About this time Pedicord, one of the chief of the itinerants, coming into the place, was announced to preach in the neighbouring village of Mount Holly, and Ware determined to go and hear him. The result of this service Ware gives in his autobiography as follows :—

"Soon was I convinced that all men were redeemed and might be saved, and saved *now*, from the guilt, practice, and love of sin. With this I was greatly affected, and could hardly refrain from exclaiming aloud, 'This is the best intelligence I ever heard !'"

On the next round of the itinerant, Ware hastened to see him. Pedicord received him with joy, and began to pray for him with loving tears, and presently the soul of the young man was filled with unutterable delight, and he felt and knew that he was a new creature. With this experience of grace all his warlike taste departed, and many of his brethren began at once to tell him that they thought he was called to preach. His own opinion was, that his literary acquirements were too limited for such a work ; nevertheless, on one occasion he filled, for a week, the appointments of George Mair, who was suddenly called from his circuit by sickness in his family, and on several other occasions had opened his mouth in exhortation with excellent effect.

In 1783, Mr. Asbury paid a visit to the Mount Holly Circuit, and sent for the young man, of whose parts and promise Pedicord had given him a favourable account, and upon examination, so well was he pleased with him that he at once laid claim to him, for service on the Dover Circuit, where there was another preacher wanting. "You may tell

the people, if you please," said Asbury, "that you do not come in the capacity of a preacher, but only to assist in keeping up the appointments until another can be sent."

"Here I was caught," says Ware, in his autobiography, "and how could I decline? And being now regularly licensed to exhort, I told him, if he insisted on it, I would go and do the best I could; and early in September, 1783, I set my face toward the peninsula with a heavy heart."

The Dover Circuit was one of the choice portions of the Methodist vineyard. Here resided those eminent Christian ladies, the wife of Counsellor Bassett and Mrs. White, wife of Judge White, already mentioned; both of whom encouraged the young preacher as true mothers in Israel. After a successful term, which at that time was six months in length, Ware attended his first Conference in Baltimore, in 1784, at which Asbury presided, and whom he describes as "excelling in prayer to such a degree that he sometimes disappointed the expectation thereby raised in his auditors in the sermon which followed." The Rev. Freeborn Garrettson has said of Bishop Asbury, "He prayed the most, and he prayed the best, of any man I ever knew;" and Ware records the opinion, that, "had he been equally eloquent in preaching, he would have excited universal admiration as a pulpit orator."

The modest young neophyte was so struck with the superior powers of the preachers whom he met at this Conference, that he was inclined to give up preaching, at least until he should become able to do it better; but his timidity was overruled by the pressure of the work, and from that time he bravely bore the banner of the cross through a long, varied, and useful career.

The timidity which at first was so noticeable in him was ultimately succeeded by an exceptional boldness and power. It is of this same Thomas Ware that the following anecdote is related:—

"Coming, one evening, to a farmhouse on one of his frontier circuits, he sought its hospitality for the night; but the farmer, seeing by his dress that he was a minister, received him very gruffly, expressed his disgust that, of all men, a Methodist preacher should come to his house, and

during the evening behaved so rudely and wickedly, that Ware felt constrained to reprove him.

“The next day some of his neighbours were asking him about the preacher whom he had entertained over-night.

“‘He is a man of God,’ said the farmer.

“‘How do you know that?’ they inquired.

“‘Ah!’ said the farmer, ‘when he reproved me for my sins, I could feel the devil shake in me.’”

As specimens of the experience of the circuit riders appointed to the Holston country, west of the Alleghanies, the following, from the “Life of Ware,” may be related:—

At the first Holston Conference, in 1788, the road by which the place of meeting was reached from the east was so infested with hostile Indians, that it could not be travelled except by considerable companies together. While the first comers waited for the Bishop and his party, they held a protracted meeting, at which there were a large number of souls converted, among whom Ware mentions General Russell and lady: the latter a sister of the illustrious Patrick Henry.

Wonders of grace accompanied the labours of Ware in his frontier circuits. In one place he gathered in six weeks a Society of eighty members, mostly heads of families, converted under his labours. At one of his quarterly meetings on New River, thirty persons on one planter’s estate were converted, twelve of whom were whites; and the revival pervaded a large district of country, in which, for weeks together, almost all worldly business was suspended, and the whole population gave themselves up to the services of religion.

The last experience of Ware on his North Carolina Circuit shows that it was not from necessity, but from choice, that he suffered the loss of all things for Christ’s sake. Among the converts on that memorable day just mentioned was a very aged couple, possessed of a large property, but with no children to inherit it. Even before their conversion they had become greatly attached to their preacher, and, on the eve of his departure, they desired him to write their will. To this he objected, on the ground that he did not understand the proper form of such a document. They replied

that their will was simply the bequest of all their worldly possessions to him, on condition that he would stay with them and care for them during the remainder of their short stay on earth. "This," says Ware, "presented a strong inducement to exchange a life of poverty and toil for one of affluence and ease. But I could not do it with a good conscience; so I bid them and North Carolina adieu for ever."

Ware was now a rising man in the Methodist fraternity, as is indicated by his appointment to Wilmington in 1791, and to Staten Island the following year. He was the first man to propose a delegated General Conference, in view of the increasing difficulties of assembling all the elders from their widely extended fields of labour. At the General Conference of 1812 he was elected Book Agent, which office he held for four years, when he again returned to the pastorate, in which form of service he spent the remainder of his life.

CHAPTER XVIII.

EARLY METHODISM IN NEW ENGLAND.

FOR a considerable number of years after Methodism was firmly established in other parts of the United States, even its name was scarcely known in New England. Garretson and Black had passed through it, and preached in its chief city on their way to meet their brethren at New York or Baltimore ; but the successors of the Pilgrims for many years appeared to regard this form of faith and order somewhat as the Hollanders do the sea, and against which they built up a system of social and ecclesiastical dykes, large ruins of which are visible unto this day. On three sides of this historic region the itinerants had early marked out their circuits, but it was not until the year 1791 that the "Bishop of North America" ventured to explore it. By this time there were a good many believers in free grace scattered along the valley of the Connecticut, and in some of the interior towns of Massachusetts, between that river and Boston Bay.

In 1803, Bishop Asbury, on his tour through Massachusetts, passed through Milford, Needham, and Waltham, to Boston, where the Conference was held in the "solitary little chapel." The slow progress of the work in this part of the field grieved him, and he writes in his Journal these sorrowful words: "Poor New England, she is the valley of dry bones still. Come, O breath of the Lord, and breathe upon these slain, that they may live!"

It is related of one Joseph Ball, a Baptist deacon, in central Massachusetts, that in the month of October, 1791, being then about to die, he called his son to his bedside, and

said to him: "My son, there will be another denomination established here, and you will know them by this, that they will preach a free salvation." Within a week this prophecy was fulfilled in the arrival of a Methodist itinerant, who of course preached "free salvation;" a doctrine which had been wholly lost sight of in New England. From Milford, where a Society was established, the itinerants extended their labours to the town of Harvard, where a preaching house was built—not finished, however; for when it was dedicated, the minister was obliged to make use of a work-bench which the carpenters had left as a platform, on which he placed a smaller bench as a pulpit. In memory of this incident one of the mothers in this Israel long afterward remarked: "In old times we had golden sermons from wooden pulpits, but now we have wooden sermons from golden pulpits." The historic inaccuracy of this excellent old woman will doubtless be pardoned on account of her wit.

Methodism was regarded as an intruder in New England. The curse of State-churchism, in a modified form, had fallen upon this favoured portion of free America, and shut up its religious hospitality. The descendants of the Pilgrims were never in a mood to welcome either Baptists, Quakers, or Methodists. They held New England as the portion of land which God had given to their fathers, both as a refuge from oppression, and as a field in which to plant and propagate their peculiar views of religion; it was natural, therefore, that they should regard it as exclusively their own. The liberty of conscience for which they had braved the wilderness, did not at all imply the liberty of later arrivals in their colony to undermine or pull down the ecclesiastical structure which they and their fathers had reared with so much toil and pains; this was their State and their Church all in one, and the Red Indian did not watch the encroachments of the pale-faces upon his hunting-grounds with more anxiety and jealousy than did the orthodox Churches of New England watch the efforts of the first itinerants to establish the Methodist order and the Arminian theology in their midst.

The land was divided into parishes, and dotted over with meeting-houses, and it was held to be the duty of every citizen to support the Gospel, just as much as to support the

public roads or the public schools. The clergy were the ruling class in secular as well as in spiritual affairs. Many of them were settled for life ; their salaries were raised by public taxes, which were collected by process of law from unwilling parishioners ; and for years no one could hold office, or even vote, unless he were a member of a Church of “The Standing Order”—that is to say, orthodox Congregationalism.

Even the sacraments had been degraded by an admixture of politics. Baptism was held to be the privilege of “all children of believers ;” but presently the question arose whether both parents must be believers in order to the administration of this sacrament upon their offspring. To meet this somewhat delicate case, the “Half-way Covenant,” as it was called, was contrived ; whereby, without a profession of personal piety, parents might signify their adherence to the doctrine and order of the Church, and thus secure the holy ordinance for their children.

The “venerable Stoddard,” one of New England’s leading divines, publicly defended the right of all intelligent and respectable persons to celebrate the Lord’s Supper. In the Presbyterian Church in the Middle States, also, this sacrament was held to be the privilege of all baptized persons who were not heretical in opinion or scandalous in life ; and the experience of conversion was not held to be essential either to Church membership or the ministerial office. An unquestionable proof of the sad decline of true religion in America may be cited in the words of the great Jonathan Edwards ; who, referring to the condition of the Churches previous to “the great awakening,” says :—

“The difference between the world and Church was vanishing away ; Church discipline was neglected, and the growing laxness of morals was invading the Churches ; and yet, never, perhaps, had the expectation of reaching heaven at last been more general or more confident.”

This was previous to the great revival of 1740, under the labours of Edwards, Whitefield, Tennent, and others ; which revival, however, produced so little permanent good, that, three years afterwards, the Annual Convention of Pastors in the Province of Massachusetts Bay issued their protest os-

tensibly against the errors of the revival, but actually against the revival itself.*

Dr. Edwards, for his opposition to the "Half-way Covenant," his bold denunciation of the sins of professed religionists, and his vigorous preaching of the doctrine of regeneration, was presently driven from his Northampton parish, and at last found an asylum among the remnant of one of the tribes of Massachusetts Indians; thus offering another illustration of the weakness, not to say wickedness, of a political form of religion.

On Saturday, the 4th of June, 1791, Bishop Asbury set out to explore New England. Having passed the last Methodist outpost in the State of New York, he entered the State of Connecticut; stopping the first night in the town of Reading. He appears to have projected this tour somewhat in the spirit of prophecy; for, on the first day, he writes in his Journal as follows:—

"Surely God will work powerfully among these people, and save thousands of them. . . . I feel faith to believe that this visit to New England will be blessed to my own soul, and to the souls of others. . . . I do feel as if there had been religion in this country once; and I apprehend there is a little in form and theory left. There may have been a praying ministry and people here; but I fear they are now spiritually dead, and am persuaded that family and private prayer is very little practised. Could these people be brought to constant, fervent prayer, the Lord would come down and work wonderfully among them. I find my mind fixed on God and the work of God."

On the 9th of June he arrived at New Haven, that famous seat of learning, and his appointment to preach having been published in the newspapers, he had the honour of the President of Yale College, some of the faculty and students, and a few prominent citizens, to hear him. They all listened respectfully, but their coolness, as compared with the warm hospitality to which he had been accustomed on his episcopal journeys in the Middle and Southern States, led him to make the following entry in his Journal:—

* Stevens's "History of the Methodist Episcopal Church," vol. ii., p. 409.

"I talked away to them very fast. When I had done, no man spoke to me. I thought to-day of dear Mr. Whitefield's words to Mr. Boardman and Mr. Pilmoor at their first coming over to America: 'Ah!' said he, 'if ye were Calvinists, ye would take the country before ye.' We visited the college chapel at the hour of prayer: I wished to go through the whole, to inspect the interior arrangements, but no one invited me. The divines were grave, and the students were attentive; they used me like a fellow-Christian in coming to hear me preach, and like a stranger in other respects. Should Cokesbury or Baltimore ever furnish the opportunity, I, in my turn, will requite their behaviour by treating them as friends, brothers, and gentlemen. The difficulty I met with in New Haven for lodging and for a place to hold meeting, made me feel and know the worth of Methodists more than ever."

The first Methodist preacher ever seen in New England was Charles Wesley. In the month of September, 1736, the vessel on which he had taken passage from Charleston at the close of his brief missionary labours with General Oglethorpe's colony at Savannah, was driven by stress of weather into Boston Bay; and, being recognized, not as a Methodist, but as a minister of the Church of England, he was invited to address the congregation at King's Chapel, at that time the only episcopal church in Boston.

Four years later came George Whitefield, the Calvinistic Methodist, whose reputation had long preceded him as the prince of preachers, though he was not known in New England as a Methodist. There was no church in the little town of Boston which could contain the multitudes that flocked to hear him; and on Saturday, the 20th of September, 1740, he sought the hospitable shade of the great elm, which then stood alone in the centre of the open lot in the rear of the town; then, as now, called "The Common;" and here he preached one of his matchless sermons to a congregation of about eight thousand people, some of whom admired and blessed him, while others cast out his name as evil. But Whitefield's administrations were little more than a marvel and a memory. They produced intense excitement, but left few permanent impressions, and for more than thirty

years Boston eyes were not blessed with the sight of a Methodist preacher. In 1772 or '73, Richard Boardman, one of the first two missionaries sent out to America by Mr. Wesley, "wandered into Boston," and gathered a little company of spiritual worshippers; but when the missionary was gone, the mission expired, and who those Methodists were, and what they were, no one now can tell.*

In 1784, William Black, returning from the Christmas Conference at Baltimore, where he had been in search of reinforcements for Nova Scotia, stopped in the capital of the Bay State, hoping to plant therein a permanent Methodist Society; but the most of the churches were closed against him, and his ministry was limited to private families and public school-houses. "His labours, nevertheless, were encouraging and successful, and a small Society was organized in the older part of the town." Being compelled to return to Nova Scotia, he was permitted to preach his farewell sermon from the pulpit of the Rev. D. Elliot, in the new North Church, on which occasion his audience numbered more than two thousand persons. Before his departure he commended the Boston Society to the care of Bishop Asbury, but his letter was never received, and the little band were presently scattered among the other churches of the town.

In the spring of 1788, Freeborn Garrettson, returning from his term of service in Nova Scotia, passed through the place, visiting those who were friendly, and endeavouring to revive the Society; but this effort also resulted in failure.

The Boston mind was calm, logical, averse to religious excitement. Even the eloquent Whitefield had been denounced by some of the Boston critics as a "vagrant," a "thief," and a "robber." Harvard University published its protest against him, and one Mr. Douglas declared that "every exhortation he delivered in Boston was a damage to the town of a thousand pounds."† Thus the pioneers of Methodism in the Athens of America encountered a task of greater difficulty than that assigned to the explorers of the Holston country, or the missionaries to Choctaw Corner. It required good courage to face a hurricane of snow among the

* Hamilton's "Memorial of Jesee Lee and the Old Elm." † *Ibid.*

passes of the Alleghanies ; but to face the cold self-satisfaction of this stronghold of Puritanism called for a courage and devotion which, even among Asbury's itinerant heroes, was not commonly found.

There was, however, one man among them whose spirit was stirred within him at the thought of the repeated failures to evangelize the chief city of the East. As early as 1784 he had resolved to press the Bishop to send him into New England ; but it was not until the spring of 1790 that he was permitted to set out for Boston, though he had travelled and preached extensively in western Massachusetts and Connecticut during the previous year.

Jesse Lee was born in Prince George's County, Virginia, in 1758, and entered the itinerant ministry of the Methodist Episcopal Church in 1783. To compass the life and character of such a man within the limits of a book is manifestly impossible. His was one of those generous, capacious, splendidly endowed natures which challenges admiration, no less than it discourages all attempts at description. To the warmth and energy of his southern blood was added a readiness of wit worthy of a thorough-bred Irishman, and a keenness and sagacity which would have done no discredit to a canny Scotchman, or the best product of the very focus of New England life.

His parents were parishioners of Jarratt, the evangelical episcopal pastor, and one of the few men in America who preached a present, personal, and conscious salvation ; and under his ministry young Lee, in his fifteenth year, was brought to a saving knowledge of Christ. At nineteen he was a class-leader in North Carolina, whither he went to manage the farm of a widowed relative ; and in 1784, at the invitation of Bishop Asbury, he adjusted his affairs, equipped himself with horse, saddle-bags, Bible, and hymn-book, and started out on a career which has made his name immortal. The next year he was invited to accompany the Bishop on his tour through the South, where he made the acquaintance of a Massachusetts man who gave him such a description of New England life, manners, and theology, as filled him with an irrepressible desire to become a missionary among that highly civilized but poorly evangelized people.

The appointment of Jesse Lee to New England, at the New York Conference of 1879, was a case of special adaptation of the man to his work. He was possessed of a courage which nothing could daunt; it doubtless amounted to impudence in the estimation of the Boston mind, which was by no means flattered at the idea of a man coming to them as a missionary from among the mountains of Virginia; his style of address was full of shrewdness as well as of force, whereby he could win the respect and rivet the attention of any audience, especially a Boston audience; and withal he had such faith in the divineness of his mission, and in the power of the Gospel which he was sent to preach, that his words went straight to the hearts of his hearers, putting them at once on the defensive, if they were inclined to controversy, or carrying them completely with him, if they were honest seekers after the truth.

He was a man of magnificent presence, much above the ordinary size; he had the manners of a southern gentleman; his voice was musical or mighty, at pleasure, and he could sing the Methodist hymns in a manner which left him little use for church bells to call together his congregation. His education was not so extensive as the uses he made of it, but it served the purposes of his ministry, and left no cause of complaint even among a people with whom a collegiate training was regarded as indispensable in a minister of the Gospel. At one of his first preaching-places in Connecticut, on his way to Boston, he was asked by his hostess if he possessed a liberal education; to which he replied, "Tolerably liberal; enough, I think, to carry me through the country."

On another occasion he applied to a minister for permission to preach in his church; and the pastor, anxious to know whether he were a learned man before admitting him to his pulpit, addressed him a question in Latin. This was quite beyond Lee's literary latitude; but while on his North Carolina Circuit he had picked up a little of the speech of the Dutch mountaineers, in which language he gravely replied to the question.

The pastor was surprised, but not satisfied; accordingly he repeated the question, this time in Greek, to which Lee

responded with some more Dutch ; which language, being unknown to the pastor, he imagined it might be Hebrew, of which he himself was ignorant ; and, on the presumption that Lee was the better scholar of the two, he granted him the use of his pulpit.

On the first round of his Connecticut Circuit, Lee was frequently treated with rudeness, sometimes approaching to violence. The majority of the ministers warned the people against him as a pestilent heretic, whom it was the duty of all good Christians to thrust out of their neighbourhood as soon as possible ; alleging that he had come to break up the Congregational Churches, and drive away their ministers. When in Fairfield, Conn., it became known that there were three women who intended to join his Society, there was great excitement and alarm, and a convention comprising forty-five ministers and ninety deacons was held, with a view to forming a compact combination against the intruders.

The next year Lee was reinforced from the ranks of the old Baltimore Circuit by three preachers—Jacob Brush, George Roberts, and Daniel Smith. These he left in charge of the circuit which he had already organized, while he himself made a long excursion through the States of Massachusetts, New Hampshire, and Vermont, and back again to Connecticut. All this while his eye was fixed upon Boston, and having resolved to pay a visit to this place, he was not a little delighted on his journey thither to fall in with the Rev. Freeborn Garrettson, who was on his return from Nova Scotia, whither he had been on a missionary tour. The hearts of these sturdy itinerants were gladdened at this providential meeting. They passed the night together, and the next morning Lee passed on to Boston, where he arrived on the 9th of July, 1790.

For several days he persistently sought for a preaching-place, but no door was opened to him. Why he should have expected Boston to open its doors for Methodist preaching does not appear. It certainly was not conscious of wanting anything in the way of religious instruction. But Boston was always ready to listen to almost anything new in the way of philosophy or religion, provided it was clearly and eloquently set forth ; and bethinking him of the

method which he had so successfully used elsewhere, he gave notice of his intention to preach on the Common on the afternoon of the ensuing Sabbath. He managed to borrow a table and have it conveyed to a convenient spot under the old elm, and at the appointed time he mounted this rude pulpit, and began, as usual, to sing a congregation together. Then, kneeling on his table, he offered a simple and fervent prayer. "When he entered into the subject-matter of his text," says one who was present, "it was such an easy, natural flow of expression, and in such a tone of voice, that I could not refrain from weeping, and many others were affected in the same way. When he was done, and we had an opportunity of expressing our views to each other, it was agreed that such a man had not visited New England since the days of Whitefield. I heard him again, and thought I could follow him to the ends of the earth." His congregation on this occasion was estimated at between two and three thousand people, and they all gave him a quiet and respectful attention.

The success of his first effort at preaching under the old elm was so great that he was encouraged to continue his ministry there during a considerable part of the summer ; and at length, in one of the alleys of the town, a place was found where it was permitted to build a Methodist house of worship. This first Methodist preaching house in New England was built with money begged by Lee in southern cities, and carried to the builders with his own hands.

In Lynn a more hospitable reception was accorded to him, and there he formed his first Society in Massachusetts, February 20, 1791, consisting of eight members. On the 27th of the same month it had increased to twenty-nine members, and in May following more than seventy persons took certificates of their attendance on his ministry—a measure rendered necessary by the laws of the State, in order to secure them from taxation for the support of the clergy of the "standing order."

The first Methodist Society in Boston was organised on the 13th of July, 1792. The first Conference in New England was held at Lynn, commencing August 3rd, 1792. There were eight persons present besides Bishop Asbury,

among whom were Jesse Lee, who was now exulting in having gained a permanent foothold in this unpromising region, and Hope Hull, “the Summerfield of his time.”

Lee pushed next his outposts over into the province of Maine, then a part of Massachusetts, consisting chiefly of dense forests, with a narrow fringe of settlements along the sea-coast and a few small towns on the rivers in the interior. Lee, as has already been noticed, was a man of magnificent proportions, physically as well as mentally; an advantage by no means to be despised, yet sometimes a disadvantage as well. There were now but few roads through the Province of Maine, and much of his journey lay along bridal-paths which were beset with rocks and fallen timber, and crossed by broad streams, most of them innocent of bridges. No one horse was equal to the itinerancy on this occasion, and Lee provided himself with two good animals, which he tired out by turns. In this way he explored this new country in all directions, preaching at York, Wells, Portland, Newcastle, Waldoborough, and Thomaston. The farthest point inland that he reached was Old Town. As the result of this tour of observation he organised a circuit west of the Kennebec River, which he called Readfield, after the name of one of its principal appointments, where the first Conference of the Province of Maine was held in 1798.

In 1794, Philip Wager was placed on the Readfield Circuit, while Lee took the general oversight of the work, and devoted himself to further explorations. The region beyond the Penobscot was to him a *terra incognita*, into whose mysterious depths he was desirous to penetrate. Passing up that river, which he crossed at Orrington, he travelled eastward, crossing the Union River at Ellsworth; thence winding around Frenchman’s Bay, to Machias, on the border of New Brunswick, whence he passed over to St. Stevens, and thence to the city of St. John, on the Bay of Fundy, the principal port of the British Province of New Brunswick.* Having made himself historic by his work in New England, Lee returned again to the South, thenceforth to be honoured as the most brilliant Methodist of his time.

* Sherman’s sketch of Jesse Lee, in “New England Divines.”

For some years previous to the General Conference of 1800, Lee assisted Bishop Asbury in holding Conferences, visiting the Societies, and preaching throughout the Connection from Maine to Georgia, and, in the judgment of many of his brethren, he was the most suitable man for bishop ; but when the Conference came to vote, there was a tie between Lee and Whatcoat, and on the third ballot the latter was elected by a majority of four. There does not appear to have been any mere party division in the case. The chief distinction between the men was this : Lee was brilliant, energetic, sound in judgment, and evidently born to success ; Whatcoat was gentle, lovable, and pious ; and in this first contest piety triumphed over talent, and the precedent was set that the evident favour of God should be held as the highest qualification for the chief office in the Methodist Communion.

Lee took his defeat with great good humour. A friend suggested to him that probably he was thought to be too witty for a bishop ; to which he replied, " You would not expect me to assume the gravity of a bishop previous to my election."

In 1809, Lee was chosen chaplain to the House of Representatives at Washington, an office which he held until 1815, and which he then resigned to satisfy the scruples of certain brethren who thought this to be too near an approach to secular work for a man who had taken the vows of a Methodist preacher.

His death occurred in September, 1816, at the age of fifty-eight, and his grave, in the Mount Olivet Cemetery, in Baltimore, was honoured with a simple monument, which has recently been replaced by an elegant shaft of Scotch granite, erected in this chief mausoleum of his Church in America by his spiritual descendants in Boston and vicinity.

The Wesleyan University was the first of the long list of Methodist colleges in America. In the year 1830 the original buildings, which had been erected for a military academy, came into the possession of the New York and New England Conferences ; in 1831 a charter was obtained, and the University opened its doors and offered its services to aid in the training of students, who hitherto had been

obliged to seek outside their Church the advantages of higher education.

Wilbur Fisk, D.D., the Fletcher of America, whose courtly manner, saintly spirit, and approved success as an educator, pointed him out as the man for this important charge, commenced his labours therein in the autumn of 1831, and closed them with the close of his peaceful and almost perfect life in 1839.

His character was a rich treasury of the brightest, the sweetest, and the purest thoughts and actions, and both as an educator and a preacher he has been set down as an ideal man. At the age of twenty he entered the University of Vermont, in which State he was born at Brattleborough, on the 31st of August, 1792; and after his graduation in 1815 he commenced the study of law. A severe illness, which endangered his life, revived the religious impressions of which he had been the subject while yet a child; and feeling himself called to the ministry, he joined the New England Conference in 1818.

From the presiding eldership of the Vermont District he was, in 1826, elected President of the Wilbraham Academy, where he made his first reputation as a preceptor, and from which position he ascended to the president's chair of the Wesleyan University. Through his untiring efforts, as well as through the marvellous attractions of his personal character, the new college soon began to exercise a wide and blessed influence. The young men who had the good fortune to be under his instruction and government learned to love him, and for love's sake to obey him, since it was evident that he was devoted, body and soul, to the work of making the most of his pupils for the Lord and for the Church. As a preacher he was everywhere admired; as a Christian he was honoured, and almost envied. For many years he professed the high attainment of perfect love, and his daily life and conversation were such as proved the work of the sanctifying Spirit upon him. Few men have been so happy in their friendships, and few so spotless in their fame.

In 1828, while Principal of the Wesleyan Academy, he was elected Bishop of the Canada Methodist Episcopal Church, which office he felt compelled to decline. Again, in

1836, his own Church elected him one of its bishops, but he modestly and conscientiously refused the office, saying, "If my health will allow me to perform the work of the Episcopacy, I dare not accept it, for I believe I can do more for the cause of Christ where I am, than I could do as a bishop." If any other man has twice declined such honours as these, his name has not appeared in our Church history.

Dr. Fisk was an able writer, as appears from his works, "The Calvinistic Controversy," "Travels in Europe," "Sermons and Lectures on Universalism," etc.; but his great popular power was in the pulpit, where he found his way straight to the hearts of his hearers. His manner was simple and natural; it was more like earnest conversation than like ordinary pulpit oratory; his words contained the richest imagery of thought, and breathed a spirit of sublime devotion, by which he lifted his hearers out of themselves up to the high plane of his own spiritual life. No excitement accompanied his sermons, no impetuous passion swept through his congregations, but people listened with their hearts as well as their ears, as if the lips of the speaker had indeed been touched with a live coal from off the altar of God; and when the records of the unseen world are brought forth and read, doubtless it will appear that to Wilbur Fisk has been given fully as many seals of his ministry as to some of those sons of thunder, whose words, indeed, caused multitudes to quake and tremble, but the echoes whereof too quickly rolled away.

For years he struggled with a fatal pulmonary disease, and died at Middletown, Conn., on the 22nd of February, 1838. His dust reposes in the college burying-ground, surrounded now by the forms of many who have here fallen out of the race for earthly honours, while his memory dwells in the hearts of the older Methodists of the East, who think of him almost as a re-appearance of the beloved Apostle John.

Stephen Olin, D.D., is another of the historic presidents of the Wesleyan University. In 1842 he succeeded Dr. Nathan Bangs in the chair of the lamented Fisk, and, like him, died at his post in 1851. He was a native of Vermont; a graduate of Middlebury College, where he won first honours;

an experienced preceptor ; a tourist in Egypt and the Holy Land, of which tour he published two volumes of admirable notes ; a vigorous thinker ; a mighty orator, and withal a man of a simple, transparent, godly soul, which was evidently too large for his body, for he died of nervous exhaustion, at Middletown, at the age of fifty-four.

Dr. Olin was succeeded in 1851 by Prof. William Aug. Smith, LL.D., eminent as an instructor in mathematics ; who, on his retirement in 1857, was succeeded by Joseph Cummings, D.D., LL.D., under whose administration, during seventeen years, those three fine edifices, the Memorial Chapel, the Library, and the Orange Judd Hall of Natural Science, were erected. The Library Hall was the gift of the late Isaac Rich, Esq., of Boston. The library contains nearly thirty thousand volumes, and a fund has been provided for its regular increase.*

In 1875, Dr. Cummings was succeeded by the Rev. Cyrus D. Foss, D.D., a scholarly man in the early prime of his life, a Wesleyan graduate, with first honours, in the class of '54, and a member of the New York Conference. Dr. Foss was elevated to the episcopal bench at the General Conference of 1880.

In 1872 the institution was opened to women, quite a number of whom have graduated with distinction. The whole number of its graduates is now nearly twelve hundred, a large proportion of whom have entered the service of the Church.

The Boston University, whose foundation is intended to comprise a complete system of affiliated colleges in all departments of learning, was incorporated in 1869, its financial basis being furnished by the munificent bequest of the late Isaac Rich, and the further benefactions of Lee Claflin and Jacob Sleeper.

In all departments women enjoy all the privileges of men, and for some years the number of students in the three

* The author acknowledges his obligation to President Foss for free access to the rich and voluminous collection of Methodist books, pamphlets, etc., contained in the University Library, comprising every obtainable early publication in England, great and small, which is of historic value, either as attacking or defending the great Wesleyan movement.

professional schools of Theology, Law, and Medicine, has exceeded the aggregate number of professional students of any other American university maintaining the same courses of study.

The President, Rev. Dr. W. F. Warren, is well known as an instructor, and by his writings, both in the United States and in the German missions of our Church.

No history of American Methodism would be at all complete without a sketch of Father Taylor, the sailor preacher of Boston. From the fore-castle of a coasting schooner to the position of the foremost pulpit genius in America seems a long distance, yet over all this distance this fatherless and motherless waif—Edward T. Taylor—has passed; and after a career as wild and as free as the ocean itself, this man, who did not even know his own birthday, entered into heaven and history on the 6th of April, 1871.

To the best of his recollection he first discovered himself in the neighbourhood of Richmond, Va., in the household of a lady to whom he had been given away. He was a preacher born. In his childhood he used to gather a congregation of the negro boys and girls belonging to the plantations about him, and preach to them most pathetically; sometimes taking for his theme the mortal remains of a kitten or chicken which had died in the course of nature, or had been assisted to death for the occasion, and so vivid a picture was this young orator able to draw of the sufferings and virtues of the deceased, that he actually brought tears to the eyes of his auditors; though it is said that if they failed to give this evidence of appreciation of his oratorical efforts, he would rush from his temporary pulpit, and bring out tears by other means.

One day, when he was about seven years old, while he was picking up chips for his foster-mother, a sea-captain passed along, who, taking a fancy to the boy, asked him if he did not want to be a sailor; and the impetuous lad, suddenly inspired with a love for a seafaring life, left his chips and his home, and started off without giving his guardian the slightest notice.

His first voyage of which there is any record was to the port of Boston, in 1811, when he was about seventeen years

of age ; at which time the metropolis of New England was a lively little town of about thirty thousand inhabitants. Unlike many other young mariners, Taylor was a steady and temperate lad, and having received permission to go ashore, instead of making for some of the dens and dives where so many seafaring men were spoiled and plundered, he took a tramp through the town, and brought up, without intending it, at the old Bromfield Street Church, where Elijah Hedding—afterward bishop—was preaching a sermon from the words, “But he lied unto him.” There was an immense crowd about the door, and the sailor boy, finding no chance of entrance, climbed in at the window, and at the close of the sermon, which impressed him most deeply, one of the brethren, seeing his condition of mind, invited him to go to the altar for prayer. This he did, and not long afterward he met with a joyful experience of saving grace, which he briefly describes as follows: “I was dragged through the lubber hole, brought down by a broadside from the seventy-four Elijah Hedding, and fell into the arms of Thomas W. Tucker.”

The Methodist meetings in those times were by no means remarkable for their stillness, and young Taylor, having learned to sing and shout in the midst of storms and hurricanes, was able to make his full share of religious noise in the meetings at the old Bromfield Street Church. His conversion was, however, recognized as genuine and thorough, and he was permitted to enjoy great liberty. He was so ignorant that he could not read the words in a plain English sentence ; but when he fell upon his knees to talk with his Father in heaven, he displayed such a simplicity, and withal such a rich imagination and familiar acquaintance with spiritual things, that he presently became quite a favourite.

After a voyage on a privateer during the war of 1812, Taylor returned to Boston, and having had enough of the sea, he settled down on shore as a junk pedlar, in which mercantile line, equipped with a cart well stocked with tin-ware, and provided with proper receptacles for rags and old iron, he travelled about the country, buying and selling, preaching and praying, and growing in grace and knowledge. Sometime in the year 1814, a pious old lady named Sweetzer, in the sea-coast town of Saugus, took a liking to the

young pedlar, and offered him employment in the care of her little farm; which being more to his liking than the junk business, he left the cart and settled down as a farmer.

Of course such a zealous young man could not be silent; and when his talents became known, he was invited to preach in the old Rock School-house, in East Saugus; where, for a considerable length of time, he amused bad people and edified good ones; using such plain language as he had picked up on sea and shore; devoting himself betimes with absolute desperation to the work of reading and committing to memory the texts of Scripture which were to be the foundation of his discourses, and the first two lines of the hymns which he intended to give out to be sung. Some rude fellows, of the baser sort, would occasionally attend his meetings in the Rock School-house to make disturbance, but Taylor always found ready hands to defend him. Many a time he tore along at the top of his voice with his rough and ready sermon while the rowdies of the neighbourhood were howling without, or stamping and groaning within.

In the spring of 1817, Taylor had the good fortune to fall in with that eminent, wealthy, and liberal Methodist, Amos Binney, who, seeing the genius of the young man, sent him to the New Market Seminary, which was then the only Methodist school in America. The proper studies, of course, for a pupil of his limited acquirements were the simple rudiments of the English language; but Taylor was a man in stature and in spirit, if not in scholarship, and therefore, instead of giving himself to reading and spelling, and the rules of English grammar, he plunged into philosophy, astronomy, and other high departments of learning, with which he struggled like a hero for a period of six weeks; after which, feeling more and more the pressure of his call to the pulpit, he bade good-bye to the school; having, however, in that short time reached the highest honours, and been appointed to deliver the valedictory address. Thenceforth he was wholly innocent of any scholastic training or restraint.

It is said that he seldom thought out, and certainly never wrote out, his matchless sermons. Those flashes of rhetoric which gave him place as the foremost pulpit genius of America were sudden inspirations, sometimes as startling as

the lightning itself, and apparently as inexhaustible in variety and beauty as the pictures in sunset skies. It was not the quaintness of his speech nor yet its bluntness—which was sometimes absolutely shocking—that brought the scholarly Bostonians to have their spirits swept by his hurricanes: they had the sense to discern in him a marvellous gift from God to see things which no other man could see, and to say things as no one else could say them. Such a man would, of course, be guilty of what in ordinary persons would be called extravagance, but in all his sky-piercing rhetoric there was always some perfectly evident practical lesson which was thus brought home to the understanding and conscience of his hearers.

Yet Father Taylor was by no means loose in his doctrinal notions. In theology he was a sturdy Methodist, and, like all the early New England preachers, he felt called to do battle with Calvinism. On one occasion, after listening to a preacher of this creed, who was insisting upon the impossibility of saving the non-elect, Father Taylor inquired, "When did you hear from Jesus Christ last?" To another, who was setting forth some of the hardest inferences from the hard Geneva doctrines, he responded, "There is no use talking, brother; your God is my devil. Give him my compliments." If any other man had spoken such words, they would have been taken as an insult, but Father Taylor was privileged by common consent to say what he liked, since, for the most part, his sayings were enjoyable as well as profitable.

For forty-three years, in unbroken succession, Father Taylor was appointed to the Mariner's Church, which organization, in 1833, moved into the spacious Bethel, erected by the merchants of Boston, in Brattle Square, which building, during Father Taylor's occupancy of it, was one of the best-known structures on the continent.

In January, 1868, having already fought for some years against the feebleness of age, fighting it, indeed, almost as if he expected to conquer instead of being conquered, Father Taylor resigned his precious Bethel pulpit, and his dear "old workshop," as he called his prayer room, into younger hands, being now in the seventy-third year of his age. In June

of the following year his admirable, devoted wife passed on before him to the land of rest, after which her husband broke up still more rapidly than ever ; his memory failing, his strength decaying, and before his death, which occurred two years after that of his wife, he had passed far down toward that second childhood, which, for the most part, is held to mark the completion of the circuit of this life, but whose very name suggests the speedy commencement of another and a better.

During his last few months he was exceedingly nervous and restless, and no bed could hold him. He seemed to be squaring off against death, determined not to be driven out of existence. During these times the old fire would sometimes kindle, and the strength of manhood for a moment thrill his wasted form, and the ruling passion, strong in approaching death, would set him preaching and praying.

About ten days before his death occurred an incident which shows with how great a love he had pursued his work of warning sinners and helping them to come to Christ. One day, as with nervous, restless steps he was pacing his room, like a caged lion, his eye caught the figure of a tottering old man in the glass. He instantly stopped, turned to the stranger, made his very best bow, and then began to preach to him. "My dear sir," said he, "you are old, you are infirm, but Christ will save you. Come now, my dear sir, come now ; He will save you." Exhausted by this effort to bring one more sinner to his Saviour he sank upon the sofa, and lost sight of the old man, who thus strangely furnished to him his last audience as a preacher. Then calling to the nurse and housekeeper, he said, "Sally, come here. That old man did not know enough to be saved ; he didn't stir a peg while I was talking to him." Two days afterward, being again able to walk, he again caught sight of the old man, and making a most courteous bow, again renewed his exhortation. "It is a very late hour," he said, "but Jesus will save you. Make the venture." And then, overcome by his feelings, he again sank upon the sofa, and again called his attendant, saying, "That old man is an infidel ; he won't have salvation at any price ;" and over the hardness of this imaginary auditor's heart he grieved with real sorrow.

Just at the turn of tide, a little after midnight, on the morning of April 6th, 1871, the spirit of this brave old sailor-preacher slipped its moorings, and sailed away on the bright waters of the infinite sea. He died in the faith he had lived to preach, and among his countless lovers on sea and shore his memory still is cherished as that of a soul too free for the restraints endured by common mortals, and a heart too large to be filled by aught besides the love of God, which also means the love of all mankind.*

* The authority for this sketch is the "Life of Father Taylor," by Gilbert Haven, D.D., Editor of "Zion's Herald," and Hon. Thomas Russell, Collector of the port of Boston, 1872.

CHAPTER XIX.

WESTERN PIONEERS.

“THE West” is a variable term. During the first quarter of the present century it signified that portion of the great valley of the Mississippi now comprised in the State of Ohio and the eastern ends of Kentucky and Tennessee, though the latter section was more frequently called the Holston Country. To record all the steps of the progress of Methodism in its westward sweep over that vast valley would be an endless task. The little band of itinerants had at length become an army in which there were scores of men, any one of whom would have been a hero if alone ; and it is to the efforts of these Methodist pioneers, more than to any other human agency, that this great central empire of America owes its Christian civilization. Here at present is the seat of power both in Church and State.

It was in the year 1785 that Richard Swift and Michael Gilbert first crossed the Alleghanies and penetrated the Holston Country. Four years afterwards Western Methodism reported three districts, comprising portions of Western Virginia, Western Pennsylvania, Kentucky, and Tennessee, under the direction of Poythress, Barnabas, M’Henry, and Amos Thompson. Another prominent frontier district at this time was the Red Stone Country, which confronted the immense wilderness known as the North-West Territory, and which was explored by John Cooper and Samuel Breeze as early as 1784 ; following in the footsteps of Robert Wooster, a local preacher who settled in this country in 1781. It was still little more than a wilderness, with no other roads than bridle-paths, and the chief settlement in the whole district was Fort du Quesne, which, after its capture from the French,

had been re-christened Fort Pitt, and which occupied the site of the present city of Pittsburgh. At that time the town was composed of a few huts which nestled under the shelter of the fort, and Pittsburgh was not incorporated until twenty years after.

The first Western Conference was held among the Holston mountains in 1788, and the first Kentucky Conference in 1790. The names of Poythress, Cooper, Breeze, Haw, Ogden, Wilson, Lee, Phœbus, Henry Willis, Ware, Burke, M'Henry, Kobler, Hitt, Henry Boehm, M'Cormick, Valentine Cook, and a host of other men of the same stamp, stand in the records of early Methodism in this country as the founders of a great spiritual empire. They were the giants of those days, and performed their ministry on circuits embracing several counties; the presiding elders' districts covered areas which afterwards formed entire States; while evangelists and explorers were sent out to unknown western regions to lay out new sections of the ever-extending kingdom of Christ.

The older districts also were still of ample size. The Albany District, for instance, travelled successively by those two great organizers, Freeborn Garrettson and Jesse Lee, comprised the whole north-eastern portion of the State of New York, a considerable part of Vermont, and as much as they pleased of Canada; and the New York Conference, in which this district was situated, was an immense territory, comprising all of New England west of the Connecticut River and the Green Mountains, and all the Methodism in Canada and in the State of New York westward, till it reached the outposts of the Philadelphia Conference somewhere in the mountains of Pennsylvania.

Ohio, one of the frontier circuits of this period, was named from "the Great River," as it used to be called, before the majestic proportions of the Father of Waters had made the Ohio seem to be but a moderate-sized stream. In 1803 the Ohio District was organized, and William Burke was appointed to take charge of it. It included all the settlements from the Big Miami to the neighbourhood of Steubenville, which was then called the West Wheeling Circuit, and down the Ohio River, including the Little Kanawha and

Guyandotte Circuits, in Virginia, and some settlements on the Licking River, in the State of Kentucky. On the north and the west the Ohio District had no boundaries at all. The first year after the organization of this district the Methodist membership thereon was reported at 1,215, while the entire strength of the denomination, on what was called the Western section, was 9,780. In 1810, seven years after, the number in Ohio was 8,781; and in the bounds of the Western section, 22,904; a rate of progress which is equally suggestive of the tide of immigration which flowed into this new country, and of the tireless work of the Methodist itinerants in following up the immigrant waggons, and spying out the cabins which nestled among the primeval forests.

The country here was still beset by hostile Indians, and the preachers were sometimes obliged to pass from their Conferences to their frontier circuits in bodies thoroughly armed; it being a very uncomfortable experience, particularly for a nervous man, to ride alone through those woods and swamps, where, in all probability, any large tree might conceal an Indian, who would not be able to distinguish a Methodist preacher from any common mortal, if once he should come within range of his musket. Congregations marched to public worship with their rifles on their shoulders, which they stacked in a corner of the cabin till the meeting was over. The pioneers had a poor chance to be religious; but the preachers of those days report some very pious souls among their frontier congregations, as well as some very brave Indian fighters, for in that day the red men were regarded as a common enemy, whose rights few, if any, white men felt bound to respect.

The roll-call of the frontier Conference brought out, among other responses, "Killed by the Indians." How many itinerants fell victims to their zeal and faithfulness it is not possible to determine; but the chance of being pierced by an arrow or a bullet, and of being scalped afterward, was one of the ordinary dangers which the itinerants of those times and regions deliberately encountered. If they escaped, it was well; if they were killed, they only reached glory the sooner.

Francis M'Cormick was born and raised in the wilds of the Virginia mountains, where he grew up wild and wicked. Having heard a powerful sermon by William Jessup, one of the itinerants in Frederick County, Virginia, his heart was filled with madness, and he determined to have nothing further to do with Methodists, also forbidding his young wife to attend their services. However, he was unable to stay away from the meetings, and he describes himself as "miserable beyond expression." Not knowing what else to do, he went to hear another Methodist, one Lewis Chasteen, of whom he says, "The preacher took his text, 'And now also the axe is laid unto the root of the tree.' It appeared to me that all the wickedness that I had ever committed stared me in my face. A trembling seized me, as though all my flesh would drop from my bones. He preached like a son of thunder, as he truly was, and, after public services, gave an invitation to such as desired to become members to join. Living in the midst of about one hundred relatives, all enemies to the Methodists, how is it possible, thought I, that I can stand to be opposed by such a multitude? It staggered me in a wonderful manner; but it appeared as though I heard a voice from heaven, 'My Spirit shall not always strive with man.' This had such a powerful effect upon my mind, that I was resolved to make a trial, let consequences be what they might." This bold stand for Christ and the truth was soon followed by a sound conversion, and he had the joy of leading his father and some of his other relatives into the kingdom of God.

He now began to exhort, and at last to preach. Being married, he could not hope to enter the itinerancy, but he now devoted himself to evangelical labours; working with his hands for the support of himself and his family in good apostolic fashion. In 1795 he removed to Kentucky, more to preach the Gospel than to better his condition, and settled in Bourbon County, the notorious head-quarters of the Kentucky whiskey interest. But here his awakened conscience and enlightened understanding taught him that slavery, which was extending in all directions around him, was wrong, and in order to escape from it he removed with his family from Kentucky into the North-West Territory, as

it was then called, and settled in Clermont County, Ohio, from which he afterward removed to a place called M'Cormick Settlement, about ten miles from Fort Washington, the *nucleus* of Cincinnati, which was then the head-quarters for the forces engaged in fighting the Indians, and was under the command of General Harrison. M'Cormick, finding the settlers in those regions thoroughly demoralized, forthwith began to preach the Gospel among them, and formed the first Methodist class and Society in the North-West Territory.

As a specimen of the hardships endured by some of these itinerants, the following, from the experience of William Burke, will be of interest. At the outset of his circuit, the neighbourhood of the French Broad River, he found himself in the midst of the Cherokee war, which was just then breaking out, and on account of which the settlers were everywhere alarmed. However, he kept his first preaching appointment, and on the evening of this day the whole neighbourhood collected, having received intelligence that Indians had been seen within the limits of the settlement. This was rather discouraging news; but he had an appointment the following day on the south bank of Little River, and it was a point of honour with the itinerants never to miss an appointment. Two of the brethren offered their services to guard and pilot him through the woods a part of the way; but the appearances were so alarming, that they left him to make his way alone, and hastened back for the protection of their families.

Burke arrived at his second preaching-place a little before noon, but found it impossible to collect a congregation, as the people from the outlying cabins and clearings were moving in and concentrating for the purpose of fortifying themselves against their red enemies. The work of making a log cabin into a fort was pressed on with all speed, and after dark the lights were all put out, and each man sat down, with his gun on his lap, while a spy was sent out to detect, if possible, the whereabouts of the Indians. Finding the people in no mood to listen to a sermon, Burke, under cover of the night, started for the next preaching-place, about ten miles distant. There was only a bridle path which led to a river without a bridge, and it was necessary

for him to reach an island in the river. The night was dark, and the timber was very thick, so that a stranger was very likely to lose himself in the forest, but Burke could not prevail on any of the people to leave the house or to afford him any assistance. "However," says he, "I put my trust in God, and I set off."

Having passed over a part of his route, he was obliged to alight from his horse, and grope his way on foot; but at length he reached the shore of the stream, and crossed over to the island, at about two o'clock in the morning. He knocked at the door of the cabin where he was appointed to preach that day, but no one came to admit him. Knowing that there were cabins not far distant, he commenced hallooing at the top of his voice, upon which some men came out with rifles in hand, and demanded to know who he was, and what he wanted, being under the impression that the shouts were given by the Indians for the purpose of decoying them from their hiding-places, and standing in readiness to give the supposed enemy a plentiful supply of powder and lead. Presently a woman, at whose house the itinerant had been accustomed to preach, recognized the voice of the minister, whereupon he was conducted to a place where the whole neighbourhood was collected, they being not a little surprised that even the terrible dangers of that region could not keep a Methodist preacher from fulfilling his circuit appointments. The next day Burke pushed on again, followed by the love and prayers of his little flock, and carrying in his own heart the proud sense of having done his duty at the evident danger of his life. But, alas! when he came to the place on the next round of his circuit, he found that all the inhabitants of that neighbourhood had been massacred by the Indians.

On one occasion the Bishop was obliged to run the gauntlet of the Indians in order to reach his Conference in Kentucky, and a band of sixteen persons gathered about him, some of them being ministers on their way to the Conference, and others laymen, who had volunteered to accompany them. They were all armed except the Bishop. The distance to be traversed was about one hundred and thirty miles through the wilderness, with but a single house on the

route. In order to protect themselves from their red enemies, the Bishop suggested that at night their little camp should be surrounded by a rope, tied to the trees at about the height of two feet from the ground, leaving only a small passage for retreat in case of attack. The rope was to be so fixed as to catch the Indians below the knee and throw them on their faces if they advanced in the darkness, which would, of course, give the alarm, and enable the episcopal party to fire with better aim. Thus for several nights they tied themselves up in the woods, but fortunately no Indian foot was caught in this snare.

One day, on this march, when they were passing up a stony hollow from Richmond Creek, at the head of which was the war-path from the northern Indians to the southern tribes, they heard, just over the point of the hill, a noise like a child crying in distress. This, they doubted not, was a strategy of the Indians to decoy them into an ambush, and immediately the party made for a place of safety near by, and called a halt, to consult on what was best to be done. Night was coming on, but it was determined to march through the darkness, two men being appointed to lead the line and keep the path, and two to act as rearguard at some distance behind the main body, whose duty it was to bring in intelligence every half-hour, that it might be known whether the Indians were in pursuit. The rearguard soon reported that the Indians were following, but it was thought the safest plan to press forward; whereupon the whole party dismounted, and, leading their horses, trudged on till day-break, when they stopped to take some refreshment. By this time the party were very much fatigued, but at least forty or fifty miles of their journey lay before them. All day they pushed on, and at night arrived at the house of a good Methodist, named Willis Green, near Lincoln Court-house, having been on the march nearly forty consecutive hours.

Henry Boehm, the son of Martin Boehm, a Bishop of the United Brethren, or German Methodists, as they are sometimes called, was among the first and foremost of the western pioneers. He possessed the double advantage of being able to preach both in German and English.

The General Conference of 1800 was followed by a great revival of religion, which extended from Maine to Tennessee, from Georgia to Canada; and the triumphs of grace which he witnessed inspired him for the great mission of his life.

This was a good initiation for Boehm, and when, during the same year, he was called out by Thomas Ware to travel the Dorchester Circuit, in Maryland, he possessed an experience and knowledge of spiritual things which, to a considerable degree, supplied his lack of other education. Asbury soon after chose Boehm for his travelling companion to the West, and they crossed the Alleghanies together, the Bishop preaching in English, and Boehm in German; but finding how well the young man was adapted to this special work, the Bishop said to him, "Henry, you had better return and preach to the Germans, and I will pursue my journey alone."

In 1808, Boehm again became the companion and associate of Asbury, in which capacity he served for five years, and afterward was appointed successively as Presiding Elder of Schuylkill, Chesapeake, and Delaware Districts. Before 1810 he had preached the Gospel in German in thirteen or fourteen different States, and was requested by Bishop Asbury to superintend the translation of "The Methodist Discipline" into the German language. Few men out of the Episcopacy have ever enjoyed better opportunities for the study of Methodism at large than Henry Boehm. During his companionship to Bishop Asbury he travelled through the length and breadth of the Connection, and his subsequent life, which was prolonged beyond one hundred years, was broadened and sweetened by those grand experiences.

The year 1800 was signalized in the West by the appearance of William M'Kendree at the head of the pioneer itinerants, "a man who earned the title of the Father of Western Methodism." For some years M'Kendree, who was a native of King William County, Virginia, where he was born in 1757, had been tending westward along the frontiers of Virginia. He had been a soldier in the war of the Revolution, was converted in 1787, and received on trial as an itinerant in 1788. Being desirous to see for himself the

official and personal character of Bishop Asbury, of whom he had heard much evil from O'Kelly, the schismatic, he obtained permission to travel with the Bishop, and in a short time was thoroughly convinced of his apostolic character and mission.

In 1799, M'Kendree was appointed to the charge of a district extending from the waters of the Chesapeake Bay to the summit of the Alleghanies, and in the following year, having passed only once around this great field, he fell in with Bishops Asbury and Whatcoat, and received orders to "pack up forthwith, and throw himself into the great western field." At this time the name of this boundless field was the Kentucky Conference, which, in 1801, was changed to that of the Western Conference. It embraced all the country beyond the Alleghanies occupied by the Methodists, extending from Central Ohio to the borders of Georgia, and reaching out into the wilderness toward the Mississippi, farther and farther every day. Over all this region William M'Kendree was appointed presiding elder.

The extent of this district was so great, that M'Kendree could only perform his round twice a year. The outlook was at first rather discouraging, but the revival wave, which commenced at the Baltimore Conference of 1800, and swept northward and southward, also overpassed the mountains, and on the Western District in 1801 and 1802 multitudes of sinners were converted. In the revival services which were held—many of them in the woods, because no house would accommodate the vast multitudes assembled—the Methodist and Presbyterian ministers laboured in right brotherly fashion; every local preacher or exhorter who could be found or raised was pressed into the work; and so completely were the denominational lines obliterated by the floods of divine grace and the commingling of labours in drawing the Gospel net, that for awhile the Presbyterians appeared to have forgotten that they were Presbyterians, and the Methodists to a considerable degree laid aside their strictness, admitting to their class-meetings all comers, and holding love-feasts with open doors. This union of effort was cordially approved by Bishop Asbury; but certain of M'Kendree's brethren exhorted him to re-establish the re-

strictions of Discipline, and cut loose from this holy alliance. It appears that the exhortation was heeded, for M'Kendree afterward says, "The union meeting-houses have been no blessing to us, but a great injury. For two years I was stationed in a union church; from ever being stationed in another, good Lord, deliver me."

In spite of all opposition, however, the spirit of unity prevailed to a sufficient extent to impress the western Presbyterian mind with the excellence of Methodist methods and the soundness of Methodist theology; and to this day Presbyterianism in the North-west is so leavened with free grace, that large numbers of Methodist converts find a comfortable home in its churches. Here and there a Presbyterian minister or professor in a theological seminary may be found who insists upon the five points of Calvin, and even teaches the old-time heresy of limited atonement; but the visits of such angels are few and far between; and if any one will carefully search among the other religious bodies of the valley of the Mississippi, he will find that not only Presbyterians, but Congregationalists and Baptists as well, hold their historic faith with a very decided leaning toward a free and full salvation.

The management of such a district as that comprised within the limits of the Western Conference was an admirable training for the Episcopacy.

Up to the time of the first delegated General Conference, which convened at the old John Street Church, New York, in 1812, Asbury had favoured the election of Jesse Lee to the episcopate, from which, as has been seen, he had already had such a narrow escape; but M'Kendree's fame now filled all the West, and the choice lay between these two admirable men. During the session, before the vote was taken, M'Kendree preached a mighty sermon from the text, "Is there no balm in Gilead? is there no physician there? Why then is not the health of the daughter of my people recovered?" The discourse thrilled the assembly like an electric shock, and on its conclusion Asbury said, "That sermon will decide his election." This prophecy was presently fulfilled, and because of his heroic achievements on the frontier, as well as of the evident presence of the Lord in his soul, he was

elevated to the office of bishop—no small honour in the presence of such men as Garrettson, Bangs, Hedding, Soule, Ware, and Lee.

It is related of Bishop M'Kendree, that when he was sent to his first circuit in Virginia, so unpromising was his appearance, and so unfavourable the first impression made, that at sight of him the brother who was to be his host broke out with, "I wonder whom they will send next;" which remark being overheard by the timid young man from the backwoods served materially to increase his embarrassment. After his first sermon this brother left the Church, supposing the young preacher would follow him; but not seeing him for some time, he returned, and there found the poor boy seated on the lowest step of the pulpit stairs, his face buried in his hands, a perfect picture of forlornness and despair. On being invited to go home to dinner, poor M'Kendree replied, in a mournful tone, "I am not fit to go home with anybody."

"Well," said his friend, "you must have something to eat anyway." Whereupon the young preacher dragged himself once more into the presence of the family.

After dinner his host plainly told him that he thought he had mistaken his calling, to which M'Kendree readily assented, and it was arranged between them that the preaching appointments which had been made for him should be recalled, and that he should go back to his work in the woods. However, there were some appointments at such a distance that it was necessary for the preacher himself to go to the places in order to recall them. A sermon in those days was not a privilege to be missed, and the good people of his circuit insisted that as he was on the ground he should preach as well as he could, and at least fill one round of appointments, instead of recalling them; to which he reluctantly consented; and so great was the blessing of the Lord upon his humble efforts, that, having reached the end of his circuit, instead of going back to his home, he attempted another round; and thus a great pioneer light was narrowly saved from being extinguished.

A glimpse at the primitive fashion in which the pioneer bishops travelled is afforded in the following brief extract

from Asbury's Journal, referring to a time when he and M'Kendree were making their episcopal tour of the South and West together. It must have been while they were in the older and more thickly settled portions of that region, or even this poor equipage would have been out of place. "My flesh," says Asbury, "sinks under labour. We are riding in a poor thirty dollar chaise in partnership—two bishops of us—but it must be confessed it tallies well with the weight of our purses. What bishops! Well, we have great news, and we have great times, and each Western and Southern Conference, together with the Virginia Conference, will have one thousand souls truly converted to God. Isn't this an equivalent for a light purse? and are we not well paid for starving and toil? Yes, glory to God!"

M'Kendree was a man of great energy, fertile in resources, modest almost to timidity, and thoroughly consecrated to his work. His sermons were clear, plain, and searching. His acquirements were varied and extensive, his eloquence was of a high order, he was careful in the administration of discipline, and thereby he greatly improved the order and efficiency of all operations of the Church. After the death of Asbury, in 1816, M'Kendree was senior bishop for nineteen years. He died March 5, 1835, at the residence of his brother, near Nashville, Tennessee. One of his last expressions was, "All is well."

Another distinguished pioneer of Methodism in the West was James B. Finley, a native of North Carolina, who commenced his itinerant ministry as a member of the Western Conference in 1809, being at that time twenty-eight years of age. The scene of his labours was in the State of Ohio. In 1853—three years before his death—the Methodist Book Concern at Cincinnati published his biography; a book abounding in wild adventure, hair-breadth escapes, backwoods wanderings, camp-life, and such other wild experiences as made up a large proportion of the biography of the western itinerants in that day.

The Methodist Episcopal Church has the honour of being the first Temperance Society. The general rules of the Society prohibited the use of intoxicating drinks as a beverage, and only allowed their use when prescribed as a

medicine by a physician. No other denomination having prohibited the use of ardent spirits as a beverage, it followed, as a necessary consequence, that all persons who refused to drink were called, by way of reproach, "Methodist fanatics," and Finley was opposed on that very ground.

On one of his circuits he relates that at one of his stopping-places his host, who was a member of his Church, took him into a room where there was a ten-gallon keg of whiskey, which the brother had laid in on account of a barn-raising.

"Do you know that God has pronounced a curse against the man who putteth the bottle to his neighbour's lips?" said the preacher to his parishioner.

"There is no law against using whiskey, and I will do as I please," replied the brother, angrily.

"Very well," was the reply, "it is a poor rule that won't work both ways. If you do as you please, I will do as I please. Take that keg of whiskey out of the room, or I will leave the house immediately, for I would rather lie in the woods than sleep in a Methodist house with a ten-gallon keg of whiskey for my room-mate."

As might have been expected, the host resented this plain dealing, and Finley, as good as his word, mounted his horse and rode off in search of other lodgings. At his appointment next day he preached a rousing temperance sermon, at the close of which an old exhorter came up to him and said, in a fierce and angry tone: "Young man, I advise you to leave the circuit and go home; you are doing more harm than good. If you can't preach the Gospel and let people's private business alone, they don't want you at all." Finley replied that he had a special mission to break up this stronghold of the devil, and with the help of God he was determined to do it in spite of all the distillers and whiskey-drinkers in the Church.

This beginning he followed up vigorously with sermons, exhortations, and private persuasions. "Frequently," he says, "I would pledge a whole congregation, standing upon their feet, to the temperance cause, and during my rounds I am certain the better portion of the entire community became the friends and advocates of temperance. In this

circuit alone at least one thousand had solemnly taken the pledge of total abstinence. This was before temperance societies were heard of in this country. It was simply the carrying out of the Methodist Discipline on the subject.”

After the West comes the North-west. From Ohio the itinerants presently pushed on westward over the Indiana Territory, which included the whole of what is now the States of Indiana, Illinois, and Michigan. In 1805, Michigan Territory was carved out of it, and the territory of Illinois in 1809. The western frontier had now become so extensive that the army of itinerants was not sufficiently numerous to be distributed very thickly, and the progress of the Church was for a time comparatively slow. The first Methodist Society in what is now Indiana was formed in 1802, at a place called Gassoway, near Charleston, in Clarke County, by Nathan Robertson, the first Methodist preacher in the Territory. In 1810 there were within the limits of Indiana only three circuits, four preachers, and seven hundred and sixty members; but this was the beginning of a mighty host, and at present Indiana, with its four large Conferences, its admirable churches, and its thriving literary institutions, may almost be claimed as a Methodist State.

The pioneer of the Methodist Episcopal Church in Illinois was Captain Joseph Ogle, who entered the State in 1785, and settled in St. Clair County. In 1798 came John Clark, a South Carolinian, who was the first man to preach the Gospel west of the Mississippi River. In the year 1804, Benjamin Young was appointed to Illinois—one man for a territory containing not far from half a million square miles; but in those days territory was more plentiful than preachers, and each itinerant, especially in the valley of the Mississippi, might have as large a parish as he pleased.

Young formed a circuit in Randolph County, organized five classes, was blessed with about fifty conversions, and, as the result of his labours during the first Conference year (1804), he returned a list of sixty-seven members of the church which he had gathered from the sparse population of his vast and promising circuit.

In 1803 a local preacher by the name of Freeman found his way into that lake-encompassed country now the State

of Michigan, and preached at Detroit. The following year Nathan Bangs passed over from Canada, which at that period formed a part of the New York Conference. He found the place wholly depraved, with a conglomerate population of French, Indians, and immigrants, who were in no mood to be reproved for their sins, or converted from them ; but soon after his departure an Irish local preacher, William Mitchell by name, organized the first Methodist Episcopal Society in Detroit, which was also the first church of any denomination in the State of Michigan. During the first eight years of the frontier work in the North-west territory, Bishop Asbury made five expeditions thither. He would not send a preacher where he was not willing to go himself.

Dr. Alfred Brunson, whose autobiography covers a period of over seventy years, and under whose eye and hand the early Methodism of the North-west took form and gathered power, was appointed to Detroit in 1822. In order to reach his circuit it was necessary to cross Lake Erie in a sailing vessel, this being before the era of steamboat navigation : and off Cleveland, nearly out of sight of land, when the crew and all the passengers were in high glee, drinking whiskey, singing songs, and telling yarns, Brunson happened to go on deck, and looking up saw a squaw coming down upon them, and instantly gave the alarm. Already the roar of the coming tempest was heard, and the captain gave the hasty order, " Let run every rag of sail ! " Brunson, who was near the mainmast, understood the order, slacked the sheets, and down came the mainsail with a run ; and having shortened sail in this lively fashion, Brunson seized the helm, and brought the vessel up into the wind. Meanwhile the crew had hauled down the gaff-topsail and jib, and a few seconds afterward the storm burst upon them. If the sails had been standing, as they doubtless would have been but for Brunson's providential appearance on deck, the vessel must have been capsized, and all on board would have perished. The craft rolled and tossed at a fearful rate, but the quick eye and prompt hand of the itinerant had saved her ; and when the danger was over, the passengers, who had listened to a sermon from him, began to discuss the question whether he were the better sailor or preacher.

It was said, during the War of the Rebellion, that a Yankee regiment could furnish men to perform any task, from the building of a locomotive to the editing of a newspaper; but for readiness in all emergencies, and universal knowledge of practical affairs, a conference of those pioneer Methodist preachers would doubtless bear off the palm.

Among the notable men who travelled both in the South-west and North-west was Jesse Walker, who appeared on the Illinois Circuit in 1806. This sturdy itinerant was a native of North Carolina, from whence he early emigrated to Tennessee. He joined the Western Conference in 1802, and travelled circuits in Tennessee and Kentucky for about four years, during which time few men equalled him in the labour performed or the hardships endured. He was a character perfectly unique. He was the Daniel Boone of the Church, always ahead of everybody else. His natural vigour was almost superhuman. He did not seem to require food or rest, like other men; no day's journey was long enough to tire him, no fare was poor enough to starve him, no route was too blind or too rough for him. Roads and paths he regarded rather as useless luxuries. If his horse could not carry him, he led his horse; and where the horse could not follow, he would leave him and press forward on foot; and if night and a cabin did not come together, he would camp in the forest or prairie, where he felt himself perfectly at home.

It is said of Daniel Boone, that he had the instinct of the bee, and that he could strike out for his cabin in a straight line from any point in the wilderness to which his wanderings might lead him. A similar instinct was possessed by Walker. He found his way through forest and brake as if by instinct. He was never lost, and being possessed of this special aptitude, it is easy to understand how the search for frontier settlers was one of his chief delights. As the Church moved West and North, it seemed to push Walker before it. Every time he was heard from he was still farther out, and when the settlements of the white man halted or moved too slowly, he pushed over among the Indian tribes.

At the time of his appointment to Illinois, in 1806, the region between Kentucky and this new field was an unexplored wilderness, and M'Kendree, then Presiding Elder of

the Cumberland District, to which the Illinois Circuit belonged, set out with Walker to assist him on his way. They journeyed on horseback, sleeping in the woods on their saddle blankets, and cooking their meals under the trees. It was a time of much rain. The river channels were full to overflowing, and no less than seven times, their horses swam the rapid streams with their riders and baggage; the travellers carrying their saddle-bags on their shoulders, that they might not spoil their Bibles, hymnbooks, and clothes. In due time they reached their destination—Central Illinois—and visited the principal neighbourhoods in the valley of the Illinois River. M'Kendree remained a few weeks, assisting in forming a new circuit, being received by the settlers with much favour; and then, it is thought, started for Missouri, to explore a mission there. Walker was now alone in the Territory, over which he travelled, preaching from house to house, or rather, from cabin to cabin, passing none without calling and delivering the Gospel message; and the Lord blessed him with a general revival of religion all over his circuit.

The nucleus of the city of Chicago was Fort Dearborn. In 1804, Fort Dearborn was built by the United States Government on the Chicago River, close to Lake Michigan, and here the town of Chicago was laid out in 1830. This fort, of course, was visited by the indefatigable Walker, and soon became a centre of operations for the itinerants of this region. "Elder John Sinclair relates that in his visits to hold quarterly meetings with the settlers in the vicinity of Chicago (the word 'vicinity' signifying a radius of about a hundred miles, except on the lake side) he always found, whenever he came upon a new family, that Walker had visited them and preached to them. Such frequent discoveries led him to become ambitious to anticipate Walker, if possible; and hearing that a family had recently located at Root River—now Racine—he resolved to be the first to visit them. On his way he stopped at Chicago, and on going to the fort whom should he meet but Father Walker. On inquiring after his health, Walker replied that he was quite well, but somewhat tired, as he had *just returned from Root River*, where he had been to preach to a family that had

recently settled there. Upon this, Sinclair says he felt rebuked, and resolved to make no more effort to deprive the old pioneer of the honours he so greatly coveted."*

In 1812, Joshua Marsden, a distinguished English Methodist preacher, visited the United States, and from the record of his impressions of American Methodism the following extracts are of interest: "I was greatly surprised," says he, "to meet in the preachers assembled at New York such examples of simplicity, labour, and self-denial. Some of them had come five or six hundred miles to attend the Conference. They had little appearance of clerical costume; many of them had not a single article of black cloth. Their good bishops set them the example, neither of whom was dressed in black. But the want of this was abundantly compensated by their truly primitive zeal in the cause of their divine Master. Their costume was that of former times, the colour drab, the waistcoat with large laps, and both coat and waistcoat without any collar. Their appearance was simplicity itself, and had something truly apostolic. I felt impressed with awe in their presence, and soon perceived that they had established themselves in the esteem and veneration of their brethren, not by the trappings of office or the pomp and splendour of episcopal parade, but by their vast labours, self-denying simplicity, and disinterested love. Most of the preachers appeared to be young men, yet ministerial labour had impressed its seal upon their countenances.

"I cannot contemplate without astonishment the great work God has performed in the United States. In England, Methodism is like the river, calmly gliding on; here it is a torrent, rushing along, and sweeping all away in its course. Methodism in England is the Methodism of Wesley—methodical, intelligent, and neat; in America it resembles Asbury—it has some roughness and less polish.

"The good they have done to the blacks is beyond calculation, and the new settlements in different parts of the interior without such a ministry might have degenerated into heathenism."

* Letter of Hon. Grant Goodrich, of Chicago, to the author.

CHAPTER XX.

*BISHOP ASBURY AND HIS EARLY SUCCESSORS—METHODISM
IN THE SOUTH-WEST.*

AMONG the many admirable qualities which distinguished the Pioneer Bishop were his simplicity and his kindness to the poor. In one of his entries in his Journal he says: "Oh, what happiness do they lose who never visit the poor in their cottages!" On another occasion, having arrived at one of the great houses at which he was accustomed to be entertained on his endless journeyings, he speaks of holding a meeting in the kitchen with the black servants, while at the same time a young minister, one of the preachers on that circuit, was holding a sacramental love-feast with the master and the mistress and distinguished visitors in the parlour.

In 1793 he writes: "Thursday, September 22. I have been sick upward of four months, during which time I have attended to my business, and ridden, I suppose, not less than three thousand miles." If a sick man of his stamp was able to work at that rate, what might he not have done if he had been well? This very thought sometimes stirred his own soul to enthusiasm, and on one occasion he broke out with these words: "I groan with pain one minute, and shout glory the next. If I only had health, America should not hold me." And thus for decade after decade he struggled with the infirmities of his body, upborne by the grace and power which dwelt in his soul.

Under his elegant and saintly exterior (which is shown more perfectly in the English portrait by Whitehouse, than in the more familiar one at New York, taken later in life) there was a good deal of native wit, which he often found

it difficult to restrain. Scattered through his Journals are moans and lamentations over the lightness and levity into which he has been betrayed ; but his wit was not of a boisterous sort, it was rather like flecks of sunshine falling through the leaves of a forest, brightening and cheering, but not stirring coarse laughter. Here is one of his quaint fashions of reproving sin, which is equally creditable to his ingenuity and his piety : “Monday, August 15, 1796. We rode to New York. While crossing the ferry, some foolish, wicked people uttered so many *damns* that I was a little afraid the Lord would sink the boat. I asked a man if he had any chalk to lend me, so that I might mark down the curses the company gave us on our passage of thirty or forty minutes.” The sight of this quiet stranger keeping tally of the oaths uttered in his hearing must have produced a healthful impression upon that boatload of rough people.

The Rev. John W. Bond, who was for a time the Bishop’s travelling companion, says : “There was never a person I was so afraid of as Bishop Asbury. There was an air of sternness about him that forbade any one approaching too near. You must wait his time ; but when he was in the humour you could approach him with perfect ease, and there would be with him the utmost simplicity and familiarity. He could be one of the most communicative of men, and for hours entertain you with pleasing and amusing anecdotes. The Bishop would appear often to be lost in thought as he was riding along ; he was either studying his sermons or planning the work in his vast field of labour : at such times there was nothing to be said to him. All at once his countenance and manner would change, and he would beckon or call his friend to come up and ride beside him, and enter into the most free and familiar conversation.” Father Boehm gives a similar account.

He had an eye to pity and a hand to relieve distress. Boehm relates that once when they were passing through Ohio he came upon a little assembly of people, and on inquiring the cause he was informed that the cow of a poor widow was about to be sold for debt ; whereupon he inquired carefully into the circumstances, and declared that the cow must not be sold. He started a subscription, headed it him-

self, and solicited from the company who had gathered for the sale money enough to pay the debt, and the cow was given back to the widow.

The Bishop was gifted with rare discernment of character. Preachers who for the first time were ushered into his presence said they felt as if he were looking through and through them ; and in these inspections he very rarely made a mistake. There was one Kline, a member of the New York Conference, a good man, but by no means a great man, who one day called upon the Bishop at his lodgings in the city of New York ; and the Bishop, stepping out of the room for a few minutes, left him there alone. Seeing a book lying upon the table near him, he took it up, and on opening it discovered it to be a manuscript volume in which the Bishop recorded his opinions of the ministers under his command. The first thing his eye rested upon was—"John Kline, a man of small preaching talents, but thought to be very pious and useful."

When the infirmities of age began to press upon him, some of his brethren wished him to retire, as God had raised up many strong men who were able to relieve him of his abundant labours. But this Asbury would not do. "No man can do my work," said he, and he persisted in travelling through the length and breadth of the Connection. He had been an excellent preacher as well as administrator in his time ; but now, perceiving that he was not able to preach as formerly, he delegated the most of his work to younger men ; but in order that he still might spread the Gospel he packed a quantity of Bibles in his carriage, and distributed them on his way, saying, "Now I know I am sowing good seed."

In the year 1807 the Bishop seems to have received a special dispensation of health. In October of that year he writes, "I am young again," [he was now sixty-two years old,] "and boast of being able to ride six thousand miles on horseback in ten months. My round will embrace the United States, the Territory, and Canada." This entry was made at Cincinnati, Ohio, in which State Methodism had been already widely extended. In the summer of 1811 he made his first visit to Upper Canada, where he met some of the descendants of the old Irish Palatine stock.

The Journal of Bishop Asbury, which is the chief foundation of Methodist history in America, as are the Journals of John Wesley in England, closes on the 7th of December, 1815. Worn out with labour and travel, he lays down his pen, and presently he is to lay down his life; not to lose it, but, after the manner of his Lord, to take it again. He has made a tour southward from Virginia as far as Columbia, South Carolina, from which point he hoped to reach Baltimore on the ensuing May, that he might be present at one more General Conference. In this expectation he was, however, disappointed. The disease with which he was afflicted terminated in consumption, which made such rapid progress as to prostrate the small remaining strength of a constitution already worn out by fatigue and labour, and trembling under the repeated strokes of disease. His mind, however, rose superior to his bodily weakness; and, impelled by an insatiable desire for usefulness, he made a hospital of his carriage, and as his strength would permit he journeyed from place to place, sitting in his chair to speak, if he were too weak to stand, and thus by painful stages he reached Richmond, Virginia, on the 24th of March, 1816.

Asbury's last sermon was preached in the old Methodist Episcopal Church in Richmond, at the date just mentioned. Perceiving his great weakness of body, some of his friends endeavoured to dissuade him from such an effort, fearing it might immediately cost him his life. But he still persisted that he had one more message to deliver in the name of his Master, and his friends tenderly and lovingly carried him into the church—he was unable either to walk or stand—lifted him into the pulpit, and seated him on a table prepared for the purpose. His text was Romans ix. 28: “For He will finish the work, and cut it short in righteousness: because a short work will the Lord make upon the earth.” He frequently paused during his sermon to recover breath and strength, and these very pauses made the sermon, which was of an hour's length, more weighty and impressive.

He is an old man now, seventy-two years of age. He has fought disease as heroically as he has fought the devil, but in this contest he is almost vanquished now. His eyes have grown so dim that he is not able to write or read the

records of appointments, and he has resigned the stations to his new colleague, Bishop M'Kendree. But he is the Bishop still—what is left of him—and with the little life that is in him he is bent on issuing one more order for an advance in God's name, all along the line. He must give his companions his farewell message; he must rehearse to them from what small beginnings God had raised them up to their present greatness; he must exhort them once more to be holy—in the last years of his life he had something to say about holiness in every discourse. He must warn them not to conform to the fashion of this world—his heart has been troubled of late by seeing even the daughters of Methodist preachers wearing ornaments of gold—and he must prophesy to them of the swiftness and glory of the final ushering in of Christ's kingdom. His old friends listen tearfully and lovingly while he gives his last charge to his last congregation, and then they take him upon their arms and lovingly carry him away.

With the hand of death upon him he arises from his bed on the Tuesday following, and sets his face toward Baltimore. He also makes brief journeys on Thursday and Friday, and finally reaches the house of his old friend, George Arnold, in Spottsylvania. Here his distress is so evident that his friends urge him to send for a physician, but he gives them to understand that it would be useless, saying, "Before the doctor could reach me I should be gone, and all he could do would be to pronounce me dead." On the morning of the Sabbath, March 31, he desires the family to be assembled, and Brother Bond, his travelling companion, sings, prays, and expounds the 21st chapter of the Revelation, as well as he is able under the pressure of the great sorrow that is impending. The Bishop, observing the distress of his companion, raises his dying hand with a joyful expression of countenance, which being observed, he is asked if he feels the Lord Jesus to be precious. He is now too far gone to speak, but exerting all his remaining strength, he raises both his hands as if in benediction, or perhaps in wonder at the heavenly glory which is already opening to his dying vision, and a few minutes after he peacefully breathes his last in the arms of his faithful companion.

His funeral was celebrated in the city of Baltimore during the session of the General Conference which he had so persistently but vainly attempted to reach. His remains, which had been temporarily deposited in the burying-ground of his friend Arnold, were, by order of the Conference, and at the request of the Baltimore Society, taken up and brought to that city, and from the parsonage of the old Light Street Church, which for years had been the nearest approach to a home that this itinerant bishop had ever possessed, he was borne on the shoulders of some of his loving sons in the ministry to the Eutaw Street Church, preceded by Bishop M'Kendree and the Rev. William Black, representatives from the Conference of British America, and followed by the members of the General Conference as chief mourners and a vast concourse of citizens. The funeral oration was pronounced by Bishop M'Kendree.

All that was mortal of this man, who was now immortal, was placed in a vault prepared for it under the pulpit of the Eutaw Street Church, in Baltimore, from which it was afterward removed to the Bishops' lot in Mount Olivet Cemetery; a burial place belonging to the First Methodist Episcopal Church of Baltimore, the present representative of the old Lovely Lane and Light Street Churches.

On this sacred spot stands the Bishops' monument, bearing memorials of Francis Asbury, Enoch George, John Emory, and Beverly Waugh; and here, also, the New England Methodists have recently erected an elegant shaft of Scotch granite to the memory of the chief apostle of Methodism in New England—Jesse Lee—whose death occurred at Hillsborough, on the eastern coast of Maryland, September 12th, 1816.

The record of the ministry of this apostolic man covers about fifty-five years, forty-five of which were spent in America; thirty of them in the office of Bishop of the Methodist Episcopal Church. Through all those years he preached on an average seven or eight times a week. He presided in no less than two hundred and twenty-four Conferences, and ordained to the ministry about four thousand men.

Enoch George, the fifth Bishop of the Methodist Episcopal

Church, was trained on one of the great frontier circuits at the head of the Catawba and Broad Rivers, in North Carolina. He was born in Lancaster County, Virginia, in 1767 or 1768. Though brought up in the English Church, he was addicted to the dissipation which prevailed in his neighbourhood. He was at length brought under the care of that pious and active Church minister, Jarratt, under whom he received his first religious impressions, and was afterward converted under the ministry of John Easter, a preacher on the old Brunswick Circuit. The revival in the neighbourhood of a village called Hicksford, in which George was converted, was marked by some of those extraordinary physical exercises which have so astonished the opponents of supernatural religion. Easter was one of the mighty men: when he preached, the multitude trembled with astonishment, and large numbers sometimes cried aloud and fell to the ground.

It was on such an occasion that Enoch George was brought under conviction. In his account of it he says: "Some fell near me, and one almost on me, and when I attempted to flee, I found myself unable. When my consternation subsided, I collected all my strength and resolution, and left my friends and the family, determining never to be seen at a Methodist meeting again. In this I was defeated. On the next day there was to be another meeting in our vicinity, and my father commanded my attendance. I went, intending to steel my heart against conviction. However, it pleased God on this day to open my eyes and turn me from darkness to light by the ministry of the word, and I was willing to become a Christian in the way of the Lord."

It was not long before George was happy in the possession of a new heart, and shortly afterward he joined a Methodist Society. His brethren, discovering in him a talent for exhortation, insisted on his performing this service, and after repeated refusals he reluctantly consented. With such favour was his word received, that he was presently "called out" by Philip Cox, and sent to a circuit in North Carolina, three hundred miles distant. This was in 1789. In 1790 he was admitted to the North Carolina Conference on trial, and thenceforth made such good proof of his

ministry, that in 1796 he reached the dignity of a Presiding Elder, and in 1816, after the death of Bishop Asbury, he was elected and ordained Bishop. His death occurred at Staunton, Virginia, August 23, 1828.

Robert R. Roberts, the sixth Bishop of the Methodist Episcopal Church, was one of the most perfect specimens of frontier ministers ever produced in America. He was born in Frederick County, Maryland, in 1778. His father was a backwoods farmer, who, when the boy was seventeen years of age, emigrated over the mountains to the Ligonía Valley, in Westmoreland County, Pennsylvania, where the family lived for years in the woods, far from schools and churches, and with no other means of grace at hand than the family Bible; but when young Roberts was about ten years old, some of the ubiquitous itinerants found out the cabin, preached the Gospel to its inmates, and not long afterward had the satisfaction of receiving the entire family into the fellowship of the Methodist Episcopal Church. In the year 1800, Roberts, who was now a stalwart young fellow, well up in felling trees, building fences, tracking game, and all the other arts of forestry and farming, received a licence as an exhorter. He made an imposing figure, standing on a stump or in a waggon, his fine form arrayed in the approved backwoods costume of hunting shirt, buckskin breeches, and moccasins; and as, in addition to the Bible, he had been a faithful student of “Wesley’s Sermons” and “Fletcher’s Checks to Antinomianism,” he was rather more than usually well qualified in point of learning to enter upon the sacred office.

When he first presented himself at the Baltimore Conference, in 1802, he made quite a sensation by his youthful freshness and vigour. The life of the forest had made its indelible impression upon him, and Asbury, who was quick to discern the powers as well as the characters of men, at once laid claim to him for service in the wilds of the West. He was a child of the wilderness; he had a body and a constitution made for danger and toil; he was a splendid shot with his rifle; he had built himself a log cabin, and dwelt for years out of sight of civilized man, tilling the earth in summer, and hunting the bear and deer and the raccoon in

winter; and thus the refinements of sea-board cities, which were so attractive to many exiles sent to the Western Conference, could have no attraction for him. His first appointments were in Western Pennsylvania, Maryland, and Ohio, where he displayed such rare abilities, that the older portions of the Church appear to have envied the West their possession of him, and after a dozen years or so in the wilderness Bishop Asbury appointed him to the very headquarters of Methodism, in Baltimore; to which place he reluctantly went, doubting his adaptation to polite society and city congregations. In the spring of 1816, Asbury being now dead, Roberts was elected to preside over the Philadelphia Conference, though he was the youngest preacher present; and with such native dignity and manifest common sense did he fill this difficult place, that he at once became a prominent candidate for the Episcopacy, to which office he was elected at the ensuing General Conference that same year.

Being a bishop, Roberts was now free. He had no ecclesiastical superior to drag him from his beloved woods and mountains, and coop him up in the streets of Baltimore and Philadelphia; and no sooner had he passed to the highest honour of the Church than he fixed his residence in the old cabin in the Chenango County woods, where he dwelt in peace during such intervals as his labours afforded him; brushing the dust of civilization out of his eyes, and its cobweb follies out of his brain; subsisting in primitive fashion, and holding communion with nature and with God. From this cabin he afterward removed to an episcopal palace in Indiana, which was then counted the "Far West." This residence, like the former, was built of logs, and both the edifice and its furniture were constructed by his own hands. His annual income during the most of his career was from four hundred to four hundred and fifty dollars (£90), which was enough for his simple wants, and comported well with the style of living in the western half of his great field, which now comprised all that was known of the vast valley of the Mississippi.

During his superintendency he traversed the entire country from Michigan to Florida, and from Maine to Louisiana, and

penetrated into the Indian countries west of Missouri and Arkansas. For the last twenty-four years of his life, that is to say, from 1819 to 1843, his nominal residence was the log cabin in southern Indiana above mentioned, from which point he diverged in all directions, taking no account of toil or fatigue, poverty or hunger, suffering or peril. In the full vigour of his life he was a man of magnificent proportions, weighing not far from two hundred and fifty pounds, with large manly features and open and pleasant countenance. There was about him a quiet suggestion of reserve power, on which, under special stress of circumstances, he was able to draw with tremendous effect. It is said of him, that, in several instances, while presiding over Annual Conferences where great excitement was about to produce general disorder, he has been known suddenly to assume as much authority as would suffice to command an army, and by the overwhelming weight of his personal will to crush out dissension, and bring order out of confusion. On the other hand, as a proof of his meekness and humility, in 1836, being in the twentieth year of his episcopate, when he was the senior Bishop, he tendered his resignation to the General Conference, simply because in his own estimate of himself his qualifications for the office, small at best, would soon be so diminished by the infirmities of age that he could not be safely intrusted with the exercise of the great powers which it implied; but to his great surprise no one moved to accept his resignation, and thus he was compelled to bear his official honours to the end. His death occurred March 26th, 1843.

The seventh Bishop of the Methodist Episcopal Church was Joshua Soule. His election to the Episcopacy occurred at the General Conference of 1824, and he seceded in 1844 with the body which formed the Methodist Episcopal Church, South. Further notice of him will therefore be given in connection with the sketch of that Church.

Elijah Hedding, the eighth Bishop of the Methodist Episcopal Church, and one of the princes in Israel, was an eastern contribution to the Episcopacy. He was born near what is now the town of Pine Plains, in Dutchess County, New York, on the 7th of June, 1780. He was blessed with a religious home training, and also enjoyed the ministrations of Benjamin

Abbott, who, in 1790, travelled the Duchess Circuit. In 1791 the Hedding family emigrated to Starksborough, a portion of the State of Vermont, then recently opened for settlement; and in this wild region the young man grew up to be a spirited, venturesome youth, a leader among his companions not only in the wild exploits of the woods, but also in such intellectual contests as prevailed in that rural region. On account of his forwardness in learning he was chosen on several occasions to read one of Wesley's sermons to a little congregation of Methodists which had assembled for worship, and his attention being thus called to the chief Methodist classic, he read through the whole series of discourses, and retained a good portion of them in his memory.

In the year 1798 he experienced a clear and sound conversion under the labours of Joseph Mitchell, who, with Abner Wood, travelled Vergennes Circuit that year; and from the day of his conversion it appeared that the seal of God was upon him for the work of the holy ministry. He had hardly been admitted into full membership before he was urged to take an exhorter's licence, and under these persuasions he began to hold meetings in the neighbourhood, sometimes delivering a well-arranged discourse, but modestly refraining from taking a text, or calling it a sermon. He was admitted to the New England Conference in 1801, and sent to the Essex Circuit, about three hundred miles in extent, embracing the whole tract of territory between Lake Champlain and the Green Mountains, and extending some twenty or thirty miles into Canada, having for his senior colleague that warm-hearted Irishman, Henry Ryan, of whom further mention will be made in connection with Canadian Methodism.

In 1803 he was appointed to Bridgewater Circuit, a field embracing the central part of the State of New Hampshire, in which he was prostrated by an attack of inflammatory rheumatism that crippled his limbs, and he was coolly informed by his physician that he would never recover their use. But being determined to keep the field to which the Lord and the Church had appointed him, he managed to climb into his saddle again, and being unable to use his hands and arms, he held the reins in his teeth, and thus

started to make the rounds of his circuit at the imminent peril of his life. Again and again he was thrown from his horse, and picked up and remounted by some passing traveller, on several occasions suffering severe injury ; but it appears that he was more than a match even for inflammatory rheumatism, which disease, being unable to hold its ground against such treatment as this, finally left him in peace, and he proceeded on his mission with more vigour than ever.

It was not long before he reached the dignity of Presiding Elder on the New Hampshire District, where for his first year of service he received the sum of four dollars and twenty-five cents (17s. 8d.) in cash. Then two years more on the New London District, in connection with which he accepted the post of parish minister in the town of Ludlow, Massachusetts, having a salary paid by the town in consideration of a stipulated amount of service which he was able to spare from his duties as Presiding Elder. In 1811 he removed to Boston, where, among many other seals of his ministry, the world-renowned sailor-preacher, Edward T. Taylor, was converted under one of his powerful sermons, which Taylor describes as “the broadside that brought me down.”

While travelling one of his early circuits, during a particularly unpleasant northern winter the ground was thawed by powerful rains, and a thin crust quickly formed on the surface. Hedding's horse had broken through this crust till his legs had become so sore and lame as to render him useless, and to obtain another horse was impossible, as no one would risk an animal in such travelling. What was to be done? The appointments were out, and the people would expect him to fill them. A less resolute man might have regarded this as a providential hedging up of his way, but to Hedding it was simply an obstacle to be overcome ; and, taking his saddle-bags on his shoulders, he started out and actually made the round of his circuit on foot, having travelled in two weeks a distance of one hundred and fifty miles. Of this pedestrian tour he long afterward says : “Frequently I would break through the ice and frozen mud in the swamps and woods, tearing my boots and keeping my feet wet most of the time ; but I persevered and got round

to my appointments at the usual time, preaching once or twice a day, besides my other accustomed services. I lived through it, but from the effects of the exposures and hardships of that tour I have never recovered to this day."

As early as 1820 Hedding's friends proposed to put him in nomination for the bishopric, but he refused to allow it, because of his humble estimate of his own abilities. Four years later, when the proposition was renewed, he wept, remonstrated, and urged a number of objections against the movement, but at length reluctantly yielded, and thereupon entered a period of episcopal service extending over thirty years, in which he proved himself to be a worthy successor of the apostles. The United States at that time embraced thirty States and Territories, and contained twenty-five million inhabitants, one fifth part of whom were under the watch-care of the Methodist ministry, and over all this field it was his duty to travel. At the time of his election there were neither railroads nor steamboats; but there were roads throughout the most of the country, on which he might be shaken up in stage-coaches, and the geography of the country was so well known that he was able to station his rapidly increasing army of preachers with some degree of definiteness, and also to sprinkle them more thickly over the land.

The death of Bishop Hedding occurred at Poughkeepsie, N.Y., on the 9th of April, 1852, after a ministry of fifty-one years, and a period of episcopal service of nearly twenty-eight years. His last illness was protracted and severe, but his mental powers were preserved clear and vigorous to the last, and in his dying moments he broke forth with praises to God, and died shouting, "Glory, glory, glory!"

It was Bishop Hedding who, at the General Conference held at Pittsburgh in 1828, took that vigorous action against the radical movement which led to the formation of the Methodist Protestant Church. It is of little avail to recall the sharp debates of those days over lay delegation and kindred measures proposed by the reformers. A little more patience on one side and a little more wisdom on the other would have saved this second division in the Methodist ranks; and it is among the events to be hoped for, that the two bodies may yet find a common form of agreement in

which, having identical doctrines, they may once more become united.

On the 12th of November, 1828, a general convention of the Reformers assembled at St. John's Church, Baltimore, at which eleven States and the District of Columbia were represented.

The second Convention of the Reformers, in 1830, was composed of one hundred and fourteen delegates, ministers and laymen being in equal proportion, representing a constituency of about eighty ministers and five thousand members. Their first name, "Associated Methodist Church," was here changed to the "Methodist Protestant Church;" the Episcopacy and presiding eldership were rejected; the Annual Conference was authorised to elect its president annually; the General Conference was provided for, which, like the Annual Conference, was to consist of an equal number of ministers and laymen, the ratio of representation being fixed at one minister and one layman for a thousand persons in full membership, and this General Conference was appointed to hold its session once in seven years.

Class-leaders, also, instead of being appointed by the pastors, as in the old Church, were to be annually elected by their classes, and the right of suffrage and eligibility to office were limited to white males in full connection and twenty-one years of age. The General Rules of Mr. Wesley and the Articles of Religion contained in the Discipline of the Methodist Episcopal Church were adopted in full. The itinerant ministry was preserved, a ritual and hymnbook were adopted, and a committee was appointed to secure the charter for a book concern. The progress of the body was rapid. At its first General Conference, held in Georgetown, D.C., May 6, 1834, at which the Rev. Nicholas Snethen again presided, fourteen Annual Conferences were represented, comprising about five hundred preachers. The membership of the body had increased to about twenty-seven thousand.

In 1877 a secession from the "Methodist Protestant Church," calling itself "The Methodist Church," was again reunited with the parent body, which now includes over thirteen hundred preachers, about one hundred and twenty thousand members, and Church property to the value of over £500,000.

Much as this secession is to be regretted, Bishop Hedding cannot be blamed for his action in the matter. He had the sagacity to see that peace lay in the direction of separation, and he possessed the courage to take the responsibility of bringing that separation about. Having settled the matter, however, he did not cherish hostility to his departing brethren, who, in spite of having felt the weight of his hand, were ultimately glad to acknowledge the kindness as well as the soundness of his heart.

Thomas A. Morris, the twelfth Bishop of the Methodist Episcopal Church, the tenth being Bishop Emory, and the eleventh Bishop Waugh, was another of that race of western heroes whose lives and labours have so blessed the rising Republic, and so enriched the history of its largest religious communion. He was born of Baptist parentage, near Charlestown, in what is now the State of West Virginia, April 29, 1794. When about nineteen years of age, he experienced the grace of God through the ministrations of the Methodist ministry, to which work he gave himself in 1814, and two years later was admitted into the Ohio Conference.

Morris may be counted as the last of the race of pioneer bishops, for before the election of his next successors the era of steam had dawned, and the country had grown so rich and prosperous, that the physical hardships of the former era formed but a very small proportion of episcopal experience. The saddle, as a seat of episcopal power, disappeared with Bishop Morris, though it is by no means certain that the increased rapidity and ease of transportation lightened the labours of the chief pastors of the Church; their appointments increasing in number quite as rapidly as the facilities for reaching them increased.

In 1802, the name "Natchez" appears on the roll of the Western Conference, with the solitary name of Tobias Gibson attached as preacher. In 1811, Mississippi appears as a district within the limits of the Western Conference, with one hundred and forty members, whereby it appears that Gibson had made a permanent impression upon that portion of the Louisiana purchase.

The indistinctness of early Methodist geography appears

in the fact that Natchez was at first set down as a part of the Georgia District, though between it and the Georgia line there was a territory large enough for two great States of the Union, absolutely unknown, except as the probable abode of wild beasts, Indians, and immigrants, and therefore a proper field for a Methodist itinerant to explore. Gibson was born in Liberty County, Georgia, in 1771, where he owned a handsome property, but in his twenty-second year he forsook it all for the privilege of preaching the Gospel. In 1793 he joined the itinerancy. Two years afterward he was penetrating the Holston Mountains, and in 1799 he volunteered to go to that unknown region on the banks of the southern Mississippi, though he was already broken in health by excessive labours and privations.

With the southern section of the Western Conference on the east, and Gibson and his band of preachers on the west, the territory which is now the States of Alabama and Mississippi was sure to be included in some Methodist circuit. In 1803, the eccentric Lorenzo Dow, whose vagaries prevented his reception as a regular member of Conference, but who persisted in preaching the Gospel on his own account, wandered through this region, and preached the first Protestant sermon ever heard on its soil. The Territory of Louisiana, which was first ceded to the United States under the administration of Thomas Jefferson, extended as far eastward as the Perdido River, and the Indian title to some of these lands having been extinguished, white settlements were formed on the Tensas, Tombigbee, Buckatano, and Chicksaw Rivers. It was to the frontiersmen of this semi-barbarous country that Dow carried the Gospel in 1803 and 1804.

In 1812, that sturdy pioneer, Jesse Walker, was sent over from Illinois to lay out a circuit in Missouri, which then appertained to the Tennessee Conference, and over which, for a considerable number of years, he ranged as "Conference Missionary," breaking up new ground and looking up new people. Already Missouri was pre-empted for Methodism. Joseph Oglesby had found time during his appointment to Illinois, in 1804 and 1805, to reconnoitre a portion of it, and in 1806—the same year that Walker

entered Illinois—John Travis was dispatched to Missouri, at which time there were only about sixteen thousand inhabitants west of the Mississippi River. This young man certainly could not complain of being crowded; for his circuit, which appertained to the Cumberland District, had no boundaries whatever except the Mississippi River on its eastward side. At the next Conference Travis reported one hundred white and six coloured members, and in 1816 a Conference was constituted, taking in all Missouri and Illinois, along with the south-western part of Indiana—a Conference without a boundary on the west, but officially set down as “including the last Methodist cabin toward the setting sun.” The first session of this Conference was held in the Shiloh meeting-house, St. Clair County, Illinois, about ten miles from St. Louis, on the 23rd of September, 1816, at which Bishop M’Kendree presided. It opened with only seven members; but before its adjournment the little company was enlarged to twenty-two, four of whom were appointed to Illinois, four to Indiana, seven to Missouri, and one to Flat Springs, in Arkansas—a wild region sixty-four miles south-west of Little Rock. On the territory included within this Conference there were known to be three thousand and forty-one members, eight hundred and forty-one of whom were in Missouri, one hundred and eight in Arkansas, nine hundred and sixty-eight in Illinois, and one thousand one hundred and twenty-four in Indiana.

Though Walker was not the first Methodist itinerant in Missouri, he ranks as the principal founder of the denomination there. Under his energetic leadership Methodism made its way against the original Roman Catholic predominance in that country, and in 1820 he planted his standard in the Romish metropolis of St. Louis, where previously no itinerant had found rest for the sole of his foot.

Of this new movement Bishop Morris gives the following account:—

“Having effectually broken the way open for Methodism in Missouri during sixteen years, Walker, eager for pioneer adventures, went, in 1823, to the Indian tribes up the Mississippi, where he laboured until 1830, when the hero of so many fields was esteemed the man for other new work,

and was appointed to the extreme North, to Chicago Mission, where he succeeded in planting Methodism in that infant city. In 1831 he was sent to the Chicago Mission, and organized many small Societies in that young and rising country. In 1832 there was a Chicago District formed, mostly of missionary ground. Walker was superintendent of this district, and missionary to Chicago town; and although he was stricken in years, and well-nigh worn out, having spent a comparatively long life on the frontiers, yet the veteran had the respect and admiration of the whole community, and in 1833 was continued in the City Missionary Station. The year 1835 closed his active itinerant life. 'He had,' says Cartwright, 'done effective service as a travelling preacher for more than thirty years, and had lived poor, and suffered much; had won thousands of souls over to Christ, and firmly planted Methodism for thousands of miles on our frontier border. In 1834 he asked for and obtained a superannuated relation, in which he lived till the 5th of October, 1835, and then left the world in holy triumph.'

CHAPTER XXI.

THE METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH, SOUTH.

AS has already been seen, the first violent opposition encountered by Bishops Coke and Asbury, when they commenced their episcopal labours in America, was in the Southern States, on account of their preaching against slavery. These two Englishmen held "the peculiar institution" in unspeakable abhorrence, though on the other hand it will be remembered that George Whitefield so greatly admired it that he offered devout thanksgivings to God, by whose providence, as he presumed, the government of the colony of Georgia was so modified as to permit him and others, like-minded with himself, to work his orphan-house plantation with labour which he should own rather than hire. Perhaps it was in view of such facts and opinions as these, on the part of otherwise unquestionably great and good men, that Asbury yielded to the pressure which he was unable to resist without the probable exclusion of himself and his itinerants from the whole southern country, and suffered slave-holders to retain their membership in the Methodist Societies which were formed of the converts of southern revivals.

The conscience of the nation was not very tender on the subject of slavery during the first half-century of our existence, as appears from the fact that even the slave-trade, which civilized nations have long denounced as piracy, was not prohibited by the Government of the United States until the year 1808; that being the year fixed upon in the Constitution itself for the abolition of that infamous traffic, which, however, it was fondly hoped would, before that date, die a natural death. But at the end of the twenty years, during which the friends of freedom had expected to celebrate the

funeral of slavery, it had grown to huge proportions. The purchase of Louisiana from France, and the efforts to supply the demand for slaves over this newly acquired territory, stimulated an inter-state slave-trade, and the raising of negroes in the Northern slave States to supply the Gulf States markets had become a well-established and exceedingly profitable line of business. The invention of the cotton-gin also opened up a great southern industry for slave labour, and it was found necessary, in order to keep peace between the States, to leave the whole question of human servitude to be managed by those who were most immediately interested in it.

That which was true of the nations was true of the churches, not only in the Methodist, but in the other great communions of America, at whose altars the owners of and dealers in human flesh celebrated unchallenged the Holy Supper which commemorates the death and passion of our Lord Jesus Christ. It is also an undisputed fact, that both among the slaves and their owners great numbers of apparently sound conversions occurred, and the kingdom of God moved on in spite of the sin of one race and the sorrow of another. Meanwhile, the line had been sharply drawn between free territory and slave territory, and the “irrepressible conflict” between these two sections of the country had commenced.

Through all these years there were many in the South who regarded slavery as a calamity, if not as a crime; and many in the North who publicly apologised for it. Thus, when Edward Everett, thinking to gain popularity with the South, said in Congress concerning slavery, that “while it subsists, where it subsists, its duties are presupposed and sanctioned by religion,” John Randolph, of Roanoke, a life-long slave-holder, replied, “I envy neither the head nor the heart of that man from the North who rises here to defend slavery upon principle.”*

Besides a prohibition of trading in slaves, the Discipline contained a section on Slavery, “of which,” says Dr. Myers—the best authority in the Church South on this subject—

* Sermon by Rev. J. C. Hartzell, D.D. Chicago, Sept. 20, 1874.

“neither party denied the validity, and it was only the northern agitators that asked any change in it.” This section was as follows:—

1. We declare that we are as much as ever convinced of the great evil of slavery; therefore no slave-holder shall be eligible to any official station in our Church hereafter, where the laws of the State in which he lives will admit of emancipation, and permit the liberated slave to enjoy freedom.

2. When any travelling preacher becomes an owner of a slave or slaves by any means, he shall forfeit his ministerial character in our Church, unless he execute, if it be practicable, a legal emancipation of such slaves, conformably to the laws of the State in which he lives.

At this Conference the Rev. Robert Newton, D.D., appeared as the representative of the English Wesleyan Conference, by whom that Church sent its fraternal greetings and a special message concerning slavery, to which an official response was made, containing the following, among other statements, which after this lapse of time are more conspicuous for their moderation than their righteousness: “But our Church is extended through all the States; and it would be wrong and unscriptural to enact a rule of discipline in opposition to the constitution and laws of the State on this subject.” And again: “Under the administration of the venerated Dr. Coke, it was attempted to urge emancipation in *all* the States, but the attempt proved almost ruinous, and was soon abandoned by the doctor himself. While, therefore, the Church has encouraged emancipation in those States where the law permits it, and allowed the freed man to enjoy freedom, we have refrained, for conscience’ sake, from all intermeddling with the subject in those other States where the laws make it criminal.” The reply quotes the instructions of Secretary Watson to the British Wesleyan missionaries in the West Indies in 1833, as follows:—“As in the colonies in which you are called to labour a great proportion of the inhabitants are in a state of slavery, the Committee most strongly call to your remembrance what was so fully stated to you when you were accepted as a missionary to the West Indies, that your only business is to promote the moral and religious improvement of the slaves to whom you may have access, without in the least degree,

in public or private, interfering with their civil condition."* Such was the official position of the Methodist Episcopal Church in 1840, a position which the more ardent abolitionists regarded with horror, and which, at all hazards, they determined to change.

Even in New England the Annual Conferences were divided among themselves; and in some of these Conferences charges of evil-speaking, contumacy, and the like, were brought against certain of the more vehement brethren who were thought to transgress the bounds of Christian courtesy and charity in their anti-slavery speeches and sermons. This of course only increased the excitement. Anti-slavery societies were formed in Churches and in Conferences; and so thoroughly was the Church permeated by this leaven of reform, that classes, Sunday-schools, missionary meetings, and love-feasts were in constant danger of being turned into schools of anti-slavery debate. The Southern Methodists, as might have been expected in view of Northern agitation, settled back more determinedly than ever upon their pro-slavery education, traditions, and habits; defied the reformers, denounced them as schismatics who were attempting to destroy the constitution of the Church itself, and by way of reprisal for the damage which their side of the question was receiving, began to insist that slave-holding should not be considered a bar to any office in the gift of the Church.

Bishop Andrew was elected to the Episcopacy by the General Conference of 1832. Early in 1844 he married a lady of Georgia, who was the owner of slaves, and thus became constructively a slave-owner. It is said that before this time he had inherited two or three negroes, whom he was prevented by the laws of Georgia from manumitting, and whom he therefore held by necessity; and he himself declared, that, in order not to be compromised by this property possessed by his wife, he made over to her all his right, title, and interest therein. Nevertheless,

* On the views of the Rev. Richard Watson respecting slavery, see his life by Thomas Jackson, pp. 372-4. In 1830 Mr. Watson was invited to accept the Chair of Belles Lettres and Moral Philosophy in the Methodist University of America, but gracefully declined it.

as husband and wife are one, Bishop Andrew was denounced as a slave-holding Bishop, and straightway became the target for abolition-arrows from all over the North.

Petitions, memorials, and addresses were poured in upon the General Conference from all quarters, having reference to this great question, and the tide of excitement was so strong as almost to carry the body off its feet. Dr. Capers, of South Carolina—afterward Bishop—and Dr. Olin, of the New York Conference, offered a resolution providing for a “Committee of Six to be appointed to confer with the Bishops, and report within two days, as to the possibility of adopting some plan, and what, for the permanent pacification of the Church,” which committee was appointed, consisting of Drs. Capers, Olin, Winans, Early, Hamline, and Crandall; and during their consideration of the momentous subject intrusted to them, the whole Conference observed a day of fasting, humiliation and prayer.

But peace was not as yet in sight. On the 18th of May, Bishop Soule, a native of the State of Maine, who had been promoted to the Episcopacy from the New York Conference, and who was recognised as one of the great minds of the Church on the conservative side of the argument, reported “that after a calm and deliberate investigation, the committee was unable to agree upon any plan of compromise.” Five days afterward a resolution was offered by the Rev. J. B. Finley and the Rev. J. M. Trimble, D.D., of the Ohio Conference, as follows :—

Whereas, The Discipline of our Church forbids the doing anything calculated to destroy our itinerant General Superintendency, and whereas Bishop Andrew has become connected with slavery by marriage and otherwise, and this act having drawn after it circumstances which, in the estimation of the General Conference, will greatly embarrass the exercise of his office as an itinerant General Superintendent, if not in some places entirely prevent it ; therefore,

Resolved, That it is the sense of this General Conference that he desist from the exercise of this office so long as this impediment remains.”

Over this resolution the battle was finally joined, and the echoes of that great debate have even now scarcely died away. The like of it was probably never heard in any ecclesiastical assembly in America. All the powers of logic, all the arts of rhetoric, all the fires of enthusiasm, all the

fury of passion, all the intensity of outraged conscience, all the resistance of a sense of wrong, and all the determination of both sanctified and unsanctified will, were exhausted, not on the mere verbal sense of the resolution, but on the great system of sin and misery which lay behind and under it. Nevertheless there was much outward courtesy and little undue vehemence of manner in the debate.

At length, on the 30th of May, Bishop Hedding, that majestic man, who was claimed by the abolitionists as their prince and leader, yet who possessed sufficient weight of character and reputation for probity to command the respect of the slave-holding party, suggested that the Conference hold no session on the afternoon of that day, and thus allow the bishops time to consult together, with the hope that they might be able to offer a plan of adjusting present difficulties; but this calm council was not at all suited to the heated temper of the assembly. Under lighter pressure both parties might have accepted it as a possible road out of their confusion; but as it was, both parties seemed to suspect a snare. It is said that the delegates of the New England Conferences were immediately called together to consult upon the alarming prospect of a slight healing of this great wound; which meeting resulted in the unanimous determination, “that if Bishop Andrew should be left by the General Conference in the exercise of episcopal functions, it would break up most of the New England Conferences, and that the only way to be holden together would be to secede in a body, and invite Bishop Hedding to preside over them.”*

On the 1st of June this great battle was lost and won. Finley’s resolution was adopted by a vote of one hundred and eleven yeas to sixty-nine nays. Of the minority, fifty-seven were delegates from slave-holding Conferences, and twelve from non-slave-holding Conferences; but only one Southern delegate, and he a transfer from a Northern Conference, voted with the majority. It was a solid South against a still divided North, though in the last-named section of the Church anti-slavery principles had now become almost universal. Two days afterward, on the morning of

* Dr. James Porter, in the *Methodist Quarterly Review*, as quoted by Dr. Myers.

June 3, Dr. Capers offered a paper looking to a division of the Church, which should be inaugurated at the then present General Conference, and in the afternoon of the same day Dr. Longstreet presented what is known as the Declaration of the Southern Delegates, which was signed by the entire delegations, except two, from the slave-holding Conferences—fifty-one names in all. The substance of this Declaration was, that the continued agitation on the subject of slavery and abolition, and the action of the General Conference in suspending Bishop Andrew, rendered the continuance of the jurisdiction of the General Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church in the South an impossibility; which Declaration was referred to a committee who were afterward—on motion of the Rev. J. B. M'Ferrin, of Tennessee—instructed “to advise, if possible, a constitutional plan for a mutual and friendly division of the Church, provided they cannot, in their judgment, devise a plan for an amicable adjustment of the differences now existing in the Church on the subject of slavery.”

This resolution was passed by a vote of one hundred and thirty-five in the affirmative and eighteen in the negative; the Southern delegates thus taking the responsibility of withdrawal, and the whole body of their Northern brethren, with only eighteen exceptions, opening the door for their departure.

Just what was signified by this “Plan of Separation” has been matter of prolonged dispute, but, happily, now its significance is no longer of any practical importance. As an answer to the vexed question that has for years been tossed back and forth between the two divisions of American Methodism, “Who was responsible for the secession in 1844, the North or South?” it may be said, New England was prepared to secede rather than accept slavery in the episcopacy; the South was prepared to secede rather than yield their views. The yeas and nays showed the North to be in the majority, and thus, as a simple question of numbers, it was of necessity the South which must secede, since it would not recede. Southern authors declare that the North was bent on changing the constitution of the Church; and doubtless, in the light of subsequent events, that which was

once charged upon them as a fault would now be claimed as an honour.

According to the Discipline, any change in the constitution of the Church required not only a two-thirds vote of the General Conference, but also the aggregate vote of three-fourths of all the members in attendance upon the Annual Conferences throughout the Church, to which bodies the proposed change must be referred. The “Plan of Separation,” although voted with such equanimity by the General Conference, failed to receive the required three-fourths vote in the Annual Conferences; the slave-holding Conferences with one voice approving, and the non-slave-holding Conferences dividing upon the change.*

What was to be done with the brethren whose right to depart was thus denied, or by what means they were to be reached after having gone out in spite of all opposition, those who voted against ratifying the “Plan of Separation” have not explained; nor was such explanation necessary; for the South, regarding their own action as final, at a Convention which met at Louisville, Ky., on the first day of May, 1845, proceeded to organize the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, according to the provisions of the above-mentioned “Plan of Separation.” Dr. Lovick Pierce, of the Georgia Conference, was elected president *pro tem.*, Bishops Soule and Andrew being afterward requested, by unanimous vote, to assume their customary rights as presiding officers.

The right of the General Conference to suspend a bishop without any form of trial, as was done in the case of Bishop Andrew, was then, and has always since been, disputed by the South, they claiming that the episcopacy is a co-ordinate branch of Church authority along with the General Conference, and that the only legal mode of proceeding against a bishop is according to the form of trial set forth in the Discipline. The report of the Committee of Church Organization, by the adoption of which the Methodist Episcopal

* The aggregate vote by Annual Conferences stood 2,135 for, to 1,070 against the change of rule. The whole number of travelling preachers at that time was 4,621 of whom 3,688 were full members and voters. Of this number, 3,205 voted on the change of restriction, 483 being absent or not voting.—*Appeal to the Records*, by E. Q. Fuller, D.D.

Church, South, was formally constituted, sets forth the fact that the action of the General Conference in the case of Bishop Andrew was extra-judicial, there being no law covering the case. It also declares that "throughout the Southern Conferences the ministry and membership of the Church, amounting to nearly five hundred thousand, in proportion of about ninety-five in a hundred, admit a division of jurisdiction indispensable to the welfare of the Church in the Southern and South-western Conferences of the slave-holding States; and this fact alone must go far to establish the right, when it demonstrates the necessity, of the separate jurisdiction contemplated in the plan of the General Conference, and adopted by that body, in view of such a necessity as likely to exist."*

On the 19th of May, 1845, Bishops Soule and Andrew were requested by the Convention "to unite with, and become regular and constitutional Bishops of, the Methodist Episcopal Church, South." The door was open for any Societies along the border which might desire to cast in their lot with the new organization, and a committee was appointed to prepare and report to the General Conference of 1846 a revised copy of the present Discipline, with such changes as might be necessary to conform it to the organization of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South.

The attempt to divide men according to their opinions, and at the same time to follow a geographical line, is one which must always be attended with more or less difficulty, in proportion to the intensity of the opinions which are thus territorially laid off. On both sides of the line which at that time separated freedom from slavery, there were persons whose views did not accord with those of the majority of their neighbours. There were Societies north of the line, a majority of which were in sympathy with the South, and there were Societies widely scattered through the South which repudiated the "Plan of Separation." Especially was this true in Kentucky, Missouri, and Arkansas, from which States petitions signed by nearly three thousand persons were presented to the General Conference after the adoption of the

* Redford's "History of the Organization of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South."

"Plan of Separation," complaining of its effect upon them, and asking for recognition as members of the Methodist Episcopal Church, as well as the appointment of ministers from its body to their pulpits; a fact which since that time has been frequently recited in the sharp controversies over this question, as a justification of the parent Church in holding its ground at the South.

The "Plan of Separation" also gave a large opportunity for disputes concerning the titles to Church property; and for years there were border wars between the two Churches, distressingly similar in temper, if not in manner, to those which history records between neighbouring nations, each of which is too fond of the territory of the other. There was also a question concerning the rights of the Church South in the property of the book concern at New York and Cincinnati; which property, after much litigation, was adjudged to be divided according to the claim of the Southern Church.

The General Conference of 1848 inherited, to a considerable extent, the troubles of that of 1844. The prompt departure of the Church South after the action in the case of Bishop Andrew was at first thought to be a relief, and an action which therefore should be concurred in as curing, though by a desperate remedy, the agitation which for years had raged like a fever in the ecclesiastical body. But the narrow escape of the ratification of the "Plan of Separation" by three-fourths of the Annual Conferences was seized upon by certain brethren at the North as a basis for a claim whereby the division of the Church property might be refused. This scheme found, as usual, advocates who were governed more by their feelings than their judgment; technical points of law were raised against a division of the Church property in the book concern; and for the sake of a few thousands of dollars, and also for the sake of defending opinions already expressed, certain great minds in the Church kept up the agitation which otherwise gave promise of subsiding: however, a charitable judgment should be formed of this partisanship, since the roar of battle was still sounding in their ears and the hot blood of contention was still boiling in their veins.

The first General Conference of the Church South was held at Petersburg in 1846, at which an organization, closely copied from that of the Methodist Episcopal Church, was effected; and at which, as a token of brotherly kindness toward their former co-religionists, the Rev. Dr. Lovick Pierce was appointed a fraternal messenger from the Church South to the Methodist Episcopal Church, and as such he appeared at the General Conference of 1848. By this time that body had committed itself to the policy of non-recognition of the Church South, in view of the failure of the "Plan of Separation" in the Annual Conferences, and to receive Dr. Pierce as a delegate therefrom might be deemed an inconsistency.

Dr. Pierce proposed that the General Conference to which he was accredited should first settle the question of fraternity, and afterward give attention, on a brotherly basis, to the financial and territorial difficulties which had grown up between the two Churches; but certain leaders in the controversy protested that to receive Dr. Pierce at all, except as a commissioner to settle difficulties, would be to recognize the status of the Church South as a co-ordinate branch of American Methodism; a course which would not only imperil certain property rights claimed by the parent Church, but also override the opinions which certain leaders had set forth; and Dr. Pierce, chagrined as well as grieved, after a courteous and dignified statement of his views, and those of the body which he represented, took his departure, and thus the door through the division wall was bolted and barred.

The separation being now complete, the General Rule on Slavery in the Discipline of the mother-Church was in 1864 changed, so as to forbid slave-holding as well as slave-trading, and thus, in theory if not in practice, the Methodist Episcopal Church was saved from that great sin. The South, of course, expunged the rule against slavery.

The same cause which had now rent the Church asunder at length produced a like calamity in the nation. Perhaps the success of the "Plan of Separation" was an added encouragement to the State-rights party of the South, in their efforts to establish a slave-holding confederacy which should be to the original United States of America what

slave-holding Methodism had become toward the Methodist Episcopal Church. It is no part of the province of this history to recall the sins and sorrows of the great Civil War in our country. Methodism, as “The Church of the People,” both North and South, was doubtless in the forefront of the fight on both sides; for the war was but a fighting over again, with powder and shot, the very same battle which, with words for weapons, had called forth the energy, the zeal, and the wrath of the two parties in the Annual and General Conferences of the Church. The Methodism of the North proudly record the honour conceded to it by President Lincoln, of sending “more soldiers to the field and more nurses to the hospitals than any other religious body;” and doubtless the Methodism of the South was no whit behind us in sustaining its political opinions at the point of the bayonet, in nursing its sick and dying soldiers, and in sending up its prayers to Heaven for blessings on what was foredoomed to be a lost cause. For four terrible years, brethren by thousands, who had once been members of the same Christian communion, rose up in what each believed true patriotic wrath, and sought to kill one another; and it must ever be but mournful satisfaction for any good man to know that the hands on his side of the conflict scattered the most death and dug the most graves. Let this bloody record pass. The great Head of the Church alone can know against what souls, both North and South, to write the awful charges of hatred, devastation, cruelty, and death; as also He alone can pardon the penitent for these great offences against His law and His Church.

During the progress of the Civil War the armies of the North occupied and held some important positions in the Southern territory, and the clergy therein were forbidden to pray in their churches for the success of the confederacy. In New Orleans, especially, General Butler announced that such supplications would be punished by military law, on the ground that such prayers encouraged the secessionists to hold out against the Union forces, and that the ministrations of the Southern clergy were firing the Southern heart.

During the occupation of New Orleans the Northern officers and soldiers there stationed rallied around the chief

representative of Northern Methodism, the Rev. Dr. J. P. Newman, who by Bishop Ames was appointed to the Carondelet Street Church ; one of the finest houses of worship belonging to the Methodist Episcopal Church, South. For a considerable time this was the leading church in the city.

The holding of Christian sanctuaries as trophies of war is no new thing in the history of so-called civilized warfare. In the Revolutionary War the armies of King George had made riding-schools, magazines, and barracks of American houses of worship ; and during the Civil War numbers of the Southern churches shared the same fate. Of this, however, the South made no special complaint—at least, no complaint in the name of religion ; but when Northern Methodists, by military authority, possessed themselves of the property of their former brothers, an estrangement between these two sections of Methodism was produced, wider and more bitter even than that occasioned by the war itself. This led, in certain quarters, to the raising of the old legal question as to the unconstitutional departure of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South ; and it was hinted that perhaps the original body, from which the South had seceded, might have some constructive claim to the property in dispute.

After the conclusion of the war these churches were all restored to their original owners ; but Northern Methodism having now planted itself in the Southern territory, and taken under its special care and tutelage many thousands of the freedmen—who could hardly expect to receive much aid in religion and learning from the churches controlled by their former masters—prepared to hold its ground and extend its power throughout the Southern country. For a time the progress of religion among the ex-slaves, under the operation of the Freedmen's Aid Society of the Methodist Episcopal Church, as well as under the working of similar organizations of other Christian communions, was rapid ; schools, colleges, and theological seminaries for black scholars, teachers, and preachers, sprang up as if by magic ; and when the smoke of battle had been cleared from Southern eyes, they beheld a strong and flourishing body of coloured Methodists in the South, who held the most loyal and grate-

ful allegiance to the Northern branch of Methodism. The same was true of other Northern branches of the Church.

After the assassination of President Lincoln, the administration of President Johnson revived the Southern spirit, and rekindled the hope of secessionists; and a systematic, and already largely successful, attempt was made to gain by policy what had been lost by war. It is no unkindness to the Southern people to say, in this connection, what their chief editors and orators have publicly declared, namely, that the issues which were settled adversely to them in the late appeal to arms were only temporarily settled. In these statements they are to be credited with a terrible consistency, which began at length to manifest itself not only in rhetoric, but by many acts of violence and crime against Methodists, both black and white. A single issue of the "Christian Advocate," in 1879, contains a record republished from the "Methodist Advocate," at Atlanta, of thirty-four Methodist preachers and teachers, both white and black, who were beaten, robbed, and some of them murdered, in the States of South Carolina, Georgia, Alabama, Mississippi, and Tennessee, for the crime of preaching in coloured congregations and teaching in coloured schools under the direction and patronage of the Northern Methodist Episcopal Church, against which body the ruffianism of the South seemed to have especial wrath.

It was, let us believe, not because of, but despite of, the influence of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, that such great iniquities were perpetrated without fear of punishment; these being only a few among the thousands of similar outrages and murders which followed the nominal conclusion of the greatest civil war that ever cursed the earth; nevertheless, in certain quarters these outcroppings of barbarism were made use of to widen, if possible, the estrangement between the two sections of American Methodism, which, as would appear, had already become hopelessly divided.

In view of the terrible array of facts just mentioned, nothing less than a miracle of grace could have been sufficient to reconcile these divided brethren; yet, in spite of the Church War and the Civil War, with all their accompanying evils and horrors, there was, down deep in the hearts of the

best men in both sections of the Church, so much of love for their common faith and order, and so much of pride in their common heroic history, that these deserts and mountains by which each had been separated from the other, as it might be to the very ends of the earth, have now, thanks be to God! been overpassed, and the best men in both bodies, who always stood nearest to each other, have once more joined fraternal hands.

The history of Christendom furnishes no parallel to this reconciliation. Let us hope that as now His grace has shown so glorious a triumph, the other and shorter distances of temper, if not of doctrine, which have divided the body of Christ may be overpassed, and thus the prayer of our Lord may be speedily answered, that in heart, if not in name, His people shall be one. If these Methodist brethren can shake hands over such a chasm, there is no conceivable gulf wide enough to keep God's people apart.

In the month of April, 1869, at a meeting of the Bishops of the Methodist Episcopal Church held in Meadville, Pennsylvania, the first official overture of friendship on the part of the Northern Church to the Church South was decided upon. The Episcopacy has always maintained its traditional conservatism. Into this upper and inner circle the wilder passions which sway the membership and the ministry in their great assemblies very seldom enter; thus it was that in spite of the zeal of victory on one side, and the rage of defeat on the other, the bishops of the two sections of Methodism maintained personal, if not official, friendship. By this time the progress of religion and of events had removed much of the rancour which, in the first instance, had led the South to secede; in the next, had moved the General Conference to reject the Fraternal Messenger and Message of the Church South; and which, through all the years of civil strife, had surged and boiled until, on either hand, political opinions had been mistaken for Christian doctrines, and patriotic enthusiasm for religious zeal. The bishops, being by their office and their opportunity the least removed from their brethren across the line, and remembering that it was their turn to make advances, reached out their hands, in the persons of Bishops Janes and Simpson,

to their brethren the Bishops of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, by whom this first fraternal delegation from North to South was courteously received at the city of St. Louis on the 7th of May, 1869.

The communication of Bishops Janes and Simpson was an overture for reunion under the vote of the General Conference of 1868, at Chicago, at which a commission of eight members had been appointed to treat with similar commissions from any other Methodist Church which might desire a union with them; an action which had primary reference to the African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church, but which was extended so as to cover all cases that might arise.

On the 14th of May the Southern Bishops responded in a dignified though friendly document; taking exception to the statements of Bishops Janes and Simpson, "that the great cause which led to the separation from us of both the Wesleyan Methodists of the country and the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, has passed away," and replying, "Slavery was not in any proper sense the cause, but the occasion only, of that separation, the necessity of which we regretted as much as you." The document also recalls the refusal of the General Conference to accept the Southern Fraternal Delegate, the Rev. Dr. Pierce, and reasserts his final words spoken on that occasion, when he said, "You will therefore regard communication as final on the part of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South. She can never renew the offer of fraternal relations between the two great bodies of Wesleyan Methodists in the United States. But the proposition can be renewed at any time, either now or hereafter, by the Methodist Episcopal Church; and if ever made upon the basis of the 'Plan of Separation,' as adopted by the General Conference of 1844, the Church South will cordially entertain the proposition."

Their reply also states, with entire frankness, the Southern objections to the conduct of Northern missionaries and agents who had been sent into their portion of the country with the "avowed purpose to disintegrate and absorb our Societies." "We do not say," continues the document, "that our own people have been in every instance of these unhappy controversies and tempers without blame as toward you; but

this we say, if any offences against the law of love, committed by those under our appointment—any aggressions upon your just privileges and rights—are properly represented to us, the representation will be respectfully considered, and we shall stand ready, by all the authority and influence we have, to restrain and correct them.”

The next step toward fraternity was the visit of Bishop Janes and the Rev. William L. Harris, D.D., then Missionary Secretary at New York, to the General Conference of the Church South, at Memphis, in 1870. That eminent scholar and divine, then the President of Drew Theological Seminary at Madison, New Jersey, the Rev. John M'Clintock, D.D., was originally appointed as the colleague of Bishop Janes, but upon his death, March 4, 1870, Dr. Harris was appointed in his stead.

The reception of these two delegates by the Southern Conference was conspicuous both for its dignity and its courtesy. They still maintained their original position, and while acknowledging the desirability of fraternal relations, recalled the oft-repeated statement of the initial step essential thereto, namely, a recognition of the validity of the original “Plan of Separation,” which was the basis of the organization of the Church South.

The General Conference of 1872 authorized the bishops to appoint a delegation, consisting of two ministers and one layman, to represent them at the General Conference of the Church South, to be held in Louisville, Ky., in 1874. The proceedings on that memorable occasion are fully set forth in the pamphlet published by the book concerns of the two Churches, entitled “Formal Fraternity,” to which the readers of this volume are referred for the admirable addresses in full of Drs. Albert S. Hunt, Charles H. Fowler, and Gen. Clinton B. Fisk, on the one hand, and the response of the committee to whom their words and their mission were referred.

In pursuance of the above, the College of Bishops of the Church South, at their annual meeting in May, 1875, appointed the venerable Rev. Lovick Pierce, D.D., the Rev. James A. Duncan, D.D., President of Randolph Macon College, Va., and Landon C. Garland, LL.D., the Chancellor

of the Vanderbilt University, as fraternal delegates to the General Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church ; and the Rev. E. H. Myers, D.D., Rev. R. K. Hargrove, D.D., Rev. Thomas M. Finney, D.D., the Hon. Trusten Polk, and Hon. David Clopton, as commissioners to meet a similar commission from the North.

The appearance of the fraternal delegates of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, in the General Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church at Baltimore, in 1876, marked the actual commencement of fraternal relations, which the best men in both parties had so long and earnestly desired. The 12th of May was the time appointed for their reception, and on this day the Conference reached its climax of interest. It was a scene never to be forgotten. The vast assemblage was moved to a solemn tenderness of feeling which words cannot describe. The revered Bishop Janes presided, and at the hour appointed the Rev. Dr. Foss, President of the Wesleyan University, came forward to present to the chairman the Rev. Dr. Duncan, who was then introduced to the Conference, which body arose to receive him. In like manner next appeared the Rev. Dr. Newman, introducing Chancellor Garland, who was also introduced to and received by the Conference with the same token of respect.

The Rev. Lovick Pierce, D.D., to the great regret of the Conference, failed to appear. He commenced his journey toward Baltimore, in spite of the burden of more than ninety years which was upon him, but was obliged to stop on the way, and could only send the greeting which he had so greatly desired to bring. In his address he thus struck the key-note of the restored harmony : " We protest against any longer use of the popular phrase 'two Methodisms' as between us. There is but one Episcopal Methodism in the United States of America, and you and we together make up this one Methodism." In reference to the points at issue, he wrote : " We do not believe that these difficulties ought ever to be discussed in either General Conference at large. They are delicate, sensitive things, never to be settled by chafing speeches ; but, as we believe, can be speedily prayed and talked to death by a joint board of discreet brethren intent upon Christian peace."

After reading the communication of Dr. Pierce, which was listened to as the words of a beloved father in Israel, the Rev. Dr. Duncan made his memorable address, which had in it something of the peaceful spirit of heaven, to which he was so soon to ascend.

After Dr. Duncan came Chancellor Garland, with a brief address admirably befitting the occasion.

To the words, so admirably spoken, the Conference and the vast representative Methodist assembly listened with emotions that swept the whole circuit of their Christian feeling, now calling forth cheers and hallelujahs, and now melting the great assembly to tears. In due time the Committee, to whom had been referred the question of appointing a commission, reported the following, which was cordially adopted :—

TO THE GENERAL CONFERENCE: Your Committee, to whom was referred a resolution adopted by the General Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, and borne to us with the Christian salutations of our sister Church, providing for the appointment of a commission on the part of that body, to meet a similar commission authorized by the Methodist Episcopal Church, beg leave to report that they recommend the adoption of the following resolution :—

“*Resolved*, That in order to remove all obstacles to formal fraternity between the two Churches, our Board of Bishops are instructed to appoint a commission, consisting of three ministers and two laymen, to meet a similar commission, authorized by the General Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, and to adjust all existing difficulties.”

CLINTON B. FISK.	F. C. HOLLIDAY.
A. C. GEORGE.	JOHN D. BLAKE.
OLIVER HOYT.	WILLIAM R. CLARK.
JAMES W. W. BOLTON.	

The following commissioners were appointed under the foregoing resolution: Morris D'C. Crawford, D.D., Hon. Enoch L. Fancher, LL.D., Erasmus Q. Fuller, D.D., General Clinton B. Fisk, John P. Newman, D.D.

On the 17th of August, 1876, the joint commission representing the two General Conferences met at Congress Hall, Cape May, New Jersey. It is worthy of notice that the Southern commission included the author of a volume entitled “Disruption of the Church” (Rev. E. H. Myers, D.D.), while on the Northern commission was the Rev. Dr

Fuller, whose "Appeal to the Records" was published as a review and a rejoinder. The commission from the North was perhaps as thoroughly representative as any equal number of men could have been. It included the veteran New York presiding elder, Dr. M. D'C. Crawford; the eminent jurist, Dr. E. L. Fancher; the vigorous editor, author, and commander of the Atlanta outpost, Dr. E. Q. Fuller; the sagacious, warm-hearted, eloquent Christian soldier, General Clinton B. Fisk; and the clerical diplomatist, Dr. J. P. Newman.

The first important step was the formal announcement by the Southern commission, that they were empowered to treat only on the basis of the much-contested "Plan of Separation," to which announcement response was made in substance, that, though there might be differences of opinion as to the force and meaning of that well-known document, there was nothing in the mind of the Northern commission to prevent their entering upon the business in hand on the basis indicated by their Southern brethren. To remove all obstacles to formal fraternity between the two Churches, the following Declaration was unanimously adopted:—

DECLARATION AND BASIS OF FRATERNITY BETWEEN SAID
CHURCHES.

Each of said Churches is a legitimate branch of Episcopal Methodism in the United States, having a common origin in the Methodist Episcopal Church organized in 1784.

Since the organization of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, was consummated in 1845, by the voluntary exercise of the right of the Southern Annual Conferences, ministers, and members, to adhere to that communion, it has been an evangelical Church, reared on scriptural foundations, and her ministers and members, with those of the Methodist Episcopal Church, have constituted one Methodist family, though in distinct ecclesiastical connections.

Thus this great historic contention came to an end, and the final adjustment of actual cases of dispute was now in order.

Under the operation of the rules then adopted, but which need not be given here, all the several cases relative to Church titles in New Orleans and elsewhere were taken up, and one by one were adjudged without the least dissension; and when the last case was reached, to the great delight of

the joint commission, the fact was recorded that every vote on every question had been unanimous. Thus, as the venerable Father Pierce had prophesied, in this small company of good men these harassing difficulties had been "prayed and talked to death."

That such a conclusion should have been reached, with all the cruel facts and harrowing memories of thirty years of discord, war, and strife, surging up by times in the minds of these men, who had seen and suffered so much on both sides of the line of separation, is the best and largest evidence afforded in this era of the Church of the power of heavenly grace to make all crooked things straight and all rough places plain. It is of God. Let all good men give thanks.

CHAPTER XXII.

GERMAN METHODISM.

AN interesting feature of Methodism is its work among the German population.

The great tide of German immigration into the western part of the United States began about 1830. Spiritually, these immigrants were as sheep without a shepherd, having but few evangelical pastors, while many of their preachers were as unbelieving as they were corrupt, a condition which caused the attention of the Church to be earnestly directed to them. It now became only a question of finding the right man to begin the work among them; and, behold, God in His providence had him already in training, in the person of Dr. William Nast. This apostle of German American Methodism was born June 15th, 1807, at Stuttgart, in the kingdom of Würtemberg; entered the lower theological seminary of the Lutheran Church, at Blaubeuren, in 1821; and in his eighteenth year he, with his class, to which also the well-known Dr. David Strauss belonged, was promoted to the university at Tübingen, to continue his studies for the ministry of the State Church. After two years, however, he retired from service in the State Church, as he was no longer willing to adhere to a form of faith which he then could not heartily defend, and paid out of his own means for that part of his course of study which had been provided by the State. For a time he led a private life, and at length, guided by providence, arrived at New York in 1828. Some time afterward he made the acquaintance of Lieut. Whitting, of West Point, and through his influence obtained the appointment of librarian and professor of the German language in the West Point Military Academy, where, in the midst

of surroundings apparently poorly suited for deep religious convictions, it pleased God to awaken his conscience to the fact that he was originally destined to be a preacher of the Gospel.

In 1835, Nast, who had wandered about in great distress of mind, found himself at a camp-meeting on the Monongahela River, where he was abundantly blessed, and where he also made the acquaintance of the famous Dr. Elliot, of the Methodist Episcopal Church. At this camp-meeting there was, among others, an aged "mother in Israel" from Pittsburgh, who, as in prophetic vision, declared to the "poor troubled German" what his future course was to be. Taking him by the hand, she exclaimed, "William, be of good cheer! God is with you. You have been awakened and converted, and the full salvation by faith will surely follow. You shall preach the Gospel to your countrymen, and many of them shall be converted to God." Soon after this the call for a German-American missionary was made, and in the fall of 1835, Nast was admitted to the Ohio Conference on trial, and sent as missionary to the Germans of Cincinnati, where he arrived in September of the same year. During this Conference year he laboured under great difficulties and with small success, yet with untiring zeal, among his countrymen, visiting them at their homes, and telling them of the Crucified One.

In the autumn of 1836 he was appointed to travel as missionary on Columbus District, in the Ohio Conference—another hard field of labour, in which he endured many privations, travelling a circuit of three hundred miles. In the fall of 1837 he was returned to Cincinnati. This year the Lord blessed his efforts with more visible success. He was enabled to begin a Sunday-school, and at the close of the year had a society of twenty-six members. During this year he also translated into German the General Rules of the Methodist Episcopal Church and the Wesleyan Catechism, which works may be designated as the beginning of the literature of German Methodism.

An increased desire manifested itself in the year 1838 to reach the German people, and voluntary contributions for the founding of a German religious newspaper poured in so

liberally, that the Ohio Conference appointed Nast as editor of a German paper, the first issue of which appeared at Cincinnati, January 1st, 1839, under the name of “Der Christliche Apologete.”

From Cincinnati the work spread into the surrounding country. In Lawrenceburgh the Society visibly increased, under the labours of a local preacher by the name of Hofer. He afterward moved to New Orleans, to preach the Gospel to the Germans of that city. As early as July, 1838, eight or ten Germans joined the English Methodist Episcopal Church at Pittsburgh, Pa. In September of this year, Dr. Nast was invited to visit them, and a German Methodist Episcopal Church of twenty-five members was established. In a similar way the Church at Wheeling, West Va., was founded.

From this time the German preachers pushed on toward the West and North-west to Missouri and Illinois, and reached St. Louis and Chicago in 1840-1, which years may be noted as especially fruitful to German Methodism.

In August, 1841, Bishop Morris complied with the oft-expressed desire of the Missouri Conference, by sending L. S. Jacoby to St. Louis, for the purpose of founding a German Mission there. The missionary began the work among the German population, numbering about 15,000, in a small frame chapel given him by the Presbyterians. Here, also, the German daily press was full of venomous opposition to German Methodism, and sought to incite the people to acts of violence; yet the cause gained a firm footing on the Mississippi, in spite of the revilings of the infidels and the denunciations of Romish priests, and at the close of the second year the Society gathered here numbered over one hundred members, and owned a pretty little church. During this first epoch German Methodism embraced within its fold some of the neglected Germans of New Orleans.

But how did German Methodism come there? By means of a teamster who had been converted at Cincinnati. His comrades often found him praying in the stable, and his conduct was so exemplary that they esteemed him highly, and gladly responded to his invitation to spend the last evening of the year (1841) with him in religious exercises.

The Lord greatly blessed the efforts of the teamster, for during the same evening several persons found peace with God. Now a preacher was called, and P. Schmucker came, worked a few weeks, organized a Society, and made preparations for the building of a church. Such was the beginning, from which sprang the German Societies of the Methodist Episcopal Church, as well as of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, in New Orleans and Texas.

At this time German Methodism also progressed eastward of the Alleghanies, and first of all planted itself in the city of New York.

In the year 1844 we find German Methodism firmly established on the Ohio, the central Mississippi, in many places of Missouri and Illinois, in New Orleans, and in New York. Less than ten years had elapsed since Dr. Nast (1838) had been sent to the neglected Germans in Cincinnati, and they now (1844) numbered nineteen missions, twenty missionaries, and 1,500 members. The mustard seed had not only taken root, but was growing, and gave promise of becoming a considerable tree.

A new period in the history of German Methodism begins with the year 1844. Up to this time the German missions in the various conferences had been distributed so as to belong to the English presiding elders' district in which they happened to be located. It is obvious that, in dividing the work thus, inconveniences and disadvantages in transferring and supplying missionaries were experienced. Having taken notice of this, the General Conference of 1844 passed a resolution to form the German work into districts irrespective of Conference limits, and to place such districts in charge of German presiding elders; the German preachers in each district to be members of that Conference to which the presiding elder may belong. Two such districts were formed in the West, and both were attached to the Ohio Conference. Henceforth German Methodism assumed a more compact form. The German districts were now credited from year to year with what they accomplished; missions could be supplied with less trouble, and the German preachers were enabled to complete the course of study so essential to them, as prescribed by the Church.

In Milwaukee the untiring W. Schreck, long since deceased, was the pioneer, and in Chicago Philip Barth was its founder. In all of these cities, especially at Chicago, German Methodist Societies flourish and exert a powerful influence. Among the first who were converted at Chicago we may mention Wm. Pfäffle, now presiding elder in the Southern German Conference, and C. A. Loeber, formerly one of the leading preachers of the Chicago German Conference, and now presiding elder at Milwaukee. The future of German Methodism in the North-west is very promising. It was respected to such a degree, that, as early as 1848, it was represented at the General Conference by two delegates, Rev. W. Nast, D.D., of the Ohio Conference, and Rev. L. S. Jacoby, D.D., of the Illinois Conference. This General Conference renewed the resolution which had been so beneficial, according to which the bishops had full authority to form German districts regardless of Conference limits, and instructed the book agent to publish in German, and as soon as possible, certain theological works of the Methodist Episcopal Church.

In 1852 the German work was represented at the General Conference by three, in 1856 by four, and in 1860 by five German delegates.

In the General Conference of 1864 were seven German delegates. At their request the German work was divided into three Annual Conferences; namely, the North-western, South-western, and Central. As this begins another period in German Methodism, the statistics of 1864 are here inserted: Preachers in charge, 238; membership, 20,293; Church property, valued at £177,700. The mission in Germany, already in a prosperous condition, is not included in the above figures.

The Methodist Episcopal Church began her missionary work in Germany at a time when Germany, in all directions, was gaining more liberal ideas in religious matters; namely, in the year 1848. As we have said before, Dr. Nast had travelled to Germany in 1844, for the purpose of founding a mission there, if it were possible. But he was obliged to report that, although the people were willing to listen to the Gospel, the time for such an undertaking had not yet

come, because the officers of State assumed too hostile an attitude against it.

The revolution of 1848 opened the way, and as a call for help had long since been heard from the Fatherland, the Bishops and Missionary Committee of the Methodist Episcopal Church resolved, in 1849, to found a new mission in Germany. The superintendency of this mission was given to Bishop Morris, who, in the month of June, 1849, appointed Rev. L. S. Jacoby, then presiding elder of the Quincy District, Ill., as missionary.

The history of the mission in Germany, which he founded in 1849, is the subsequent history of his life. In 1872, his health failing, he returned to America, was engaged for a short time as presiding elder in the South-western Conference, and died in the triumph of faith in 1874.

Toward the close of 1855 Methodism had become known in all Germany, and had founded missions in the North, in the Central States, in the Palatinate of the Rhine, in the South, and in Switzerland. In February, 1856, the superintendent followed the invitation of the Missionary Committee, and came to America to represent the mission at the General Conference held at Indianapolis, where the privilege of organizing a Conference in Germany was granted, and on September 10, of the same year, the first Mission Conference in Germany was held in the chapel of the Tract Establishment.

In the year 1858 was established the Methodist Theological Seminary. The beginning was very insignificant, and was made at Bremen. Its growth, however, was rapid, and the present Martin Mission Institute at Frankfort grew out of this germ. The catechism used at present by the German Methodists was also written by Dr. Nast, upon order of the General Conference, and afterward the same was translated into the English language.

As well as to Church literature, German Methodism gave early attention to Church educational interests. The following is the list of its schools :—

1. The Central Wesleyan College at Warrenton, Mo.
2. The Orphanage and College at Berea, O.
3. The Normal School at Galena, Illinois.

4. The German College at Mount Pleasant, Iowa.
5. The Martin Mission Institute in Germany.

The German work at present includes eight Conferences ; namely, the Central, Chicago, North-west, St. Louis, Western, East, and Southern German Conferences in the United States, and the Conference of Germany and Switzerland, besides the missions in Louisiana and California. Exclusive of those who are to-day gathered in German Societies, thousands of Germans have joined English Societies, and exert a good influence there.

German Methodism is not instrumental in saving souls alone, but it has proved itself an element in promoting civilization ; it assists in establishing American institutions, and making them effective ; it is the champion of these among a part of our population that can be reached only in their own tongue ; it propagates genuine Protestant principles in circles to which it alone can gain access by its special missionary work.

[The above account of German Methodism refers to its connection with the United States only. But British Methodism has also done a good work in Germany. For several years it was represented at Winnenden by a lay evangelist ; but in the year 1859 the Rev. John Lyth was appointed to that station, and ere long, notwithstanding a flood-tide of opposition, a blessed work was wrought ; many Germans were converted ; a considerable number of valuable ministers were raised up in the country ; Churches were formed, not only in Germany itself, but in Austria ; and now there are in these parts of Europe, under the British Methodist Conference, 23 circuits, 28 ministers, 127 local preachers, and 136 class-leaders. The number of Church members is 2,230, and of Sunday scholars 2,424. At Canstatt there is a Theological Students' Department, under the direction of an English minister ; and a valuable literature is in circulation, including periodicals and large numbers of tracts. But in Wurtemberg and elsewhere persecution has not yet ceased ; the Lutheran Evangelical Church, so called, being as violent in its opposition as Popery itself. In Vienna, public worship can only be carried on under very stringent regulations ; yet God blesses His servants, and light is streaming through the land,

We may add that a German Mission exists in London, under the direction of a German minister, in connection with which there are upwards of 160 Church members, an excellent Sunday-school, and many other agencies for the spread of vital Christianity among the German population of the great metropolis. A chapel has been erected in Commercial Road, to the memory of Peter Bohler, which was dedicated to the worship of God on the 21st of June, 1881. It seats 475 persons; and under it is a commodious school-room, with rooms for classes, and all other necessary accommodation. The cost, including the freehold, site, etc., was £5,400, towards which the Wesleyan Thanksgiving Fund Committee made a generous grant of £2,000. Many thousands of Germans reside in London, among whom a large field of usefulness is opening to Methodism.]

CHAPTER XXIII.

OREGON.

THE origin of the Church on the Pacific coast is a matter worthy of a place in this volume.

In 1832, four Oregon Indians, belonging to the flat-headed tribe, appeared in the city of St. Louis, saying they had come to inquire about "the great book." By some unknown means they had heard of the white man's Bible, and, led by that light which "lighteth every man that cometh into the world," they made their long journey over mountains and deserts to the principal trading-post on the Mississippi. This singular and impressive fact excited great interest among the eastern Churches, and in 1834 Jason Lee and his cousin, Daniel Lee, under the auspices of the Methodist Missionary Board, crossed the continent, and established the first mission in Oregon.

Jason Lee, the pioneer missionary to Oregon, was a Canadian by birth, who received an education at the Wesleyan Academy at Wilbraham, Mass., then under the care of Dr. Wilbur Fisk. Like many other students of this institution in its early days, Lee was already far past his youth; a strong man physically, intellectually, and spiritually, with a clear head, a sound judgment, and of a courageous and devoted spirit. It was his intention to spend his life in missionary work among the Canadian Indians, under the direction of the British Wesleyan Missionary Society, but when his old preceptor, Dr. Fisk, heard the Macedonian cry of those four red men from Oregon, he at once nominated Lee as the man of all others to be intrusted with the founding of a mission, which meant the founding of a State. To this evident call of providence Lee joyfully responded,

and at the head of a little company of woodsmen he started across the continent, taking the route followed by the American Fur Trading Company; the whole summer of 1834 being occupied in their journey to the Columbia River. On his arrival in the region of The Dalles of the Columbia, Lee selected a location for his mission on the Willamette River, about twelve miles below the present city of Salem.

In 1838, he returned overland to New York, bringing with him the tidings of the success of the Gospel among the Indians, and seeking for reinforcements for the new and rapidly extending field. After a year spent in delivering addresses in the chief eastern cities, he succeeded in organizing the largest missionary expedition that ever sailed from an American port, which body of ministers and emigrants left New York in 1839, and landed in Oregon in June, 1840, having made the voyage by way of Cape Horn.

Although Lee, the four Hines brothers, and other sturdy pioneer preachers went out to labour among the Indians, their success among them was the least of their achievements. In 1839, immigrants began to pour into this magnificent valley, and nine years afterward Oregon was organized into a Territory. During this year the General Conference authorized the establishment of the Oregon and California Mission Conference, the Rev. William Roberts, of the Philadelphia Conference, being appointed as Missionary Superintendent, with a field comprising the entire Protestant civilization between the Sierras and the Pacific Ocean. "The names of Roberts and his comrade Pearne," says Bishop Peck, "will ever remain among the great men of the Pacific coast. They were stalwart, powerful, pushing men, whose enterprise and sagacity secured to Methodism and to civilization a country in which there are now five flourishing Methodism Conferences, and out of which has been organized three great States of the Union."

For four years Roberts ranged from the Columbia River to the Golden Gate, having, previous to his appointment, by direction of the Missionary Board, in 1846, explored what was then the territory of Upper California, and organized the first Methodist Church in what was then the little half-

Spanish city of San Francisco. In 1852, this region was divided, and the Oregon Conference was organized by Bishop Ames, who visited that country in 1853, and reported a membership of 921, with twenty-seven travelling and thirty-five local preachers.

The Rev. James H. Wilbur, known among the Indians in Oregon and Washington Territories as "Father Wilbur," was appointed to this field in 1847. In 1853 he was made Superintendent of the work in Southern Oregon, and in 1861 he was appointed to the Indian reserve in the Yakima district, where he has since lived and laboured. Father Wilbur has identified himself with the true interests of the red men, who have boundless faith in him; and this is doubtless one of the great reasons for the prosperity of his mission, which has now about four hundred members, with several native Indian preachers. His work is regarded as a wonderful success.

The Willamette University, at Salem, Oregon, is the successor of a little mission and manual-labour school established in 1834 by Jason and Daniel Lee. These men, foreseeing the growth and requirements of the Church, secured large tracts of land in the Willamette valley, on which the city of Salem was afterward built, from the proceeds whereof it was hoped that large educational endowments would be realized.

The five conferences formed from the territory pre-empted by Lee and his brethren are, the Oregon, Columbia River, California, Southern California, and Nevada Conferences; whose genesis would form a volume of surpassing power and interest. No attempt will here be made to write a history of the stirring events in the midst of which, under the leadership of that great-hearted Pauline missionary, William Taylor, ("California Taylor," as he is called at the East, to distinguish him from the Boston sailor-preacher,) the Methodist Episcopal Church became so great a power for good in the city of San Francisco and the region round about. Some day the Pacific Coast will have its own historian. May his genius and inspiration be equal to his theme!

About the time of the discovery of gold in California, in

1849, the Rev. Isaac Owen, of the Indiana Conference, and the Rev. William Taylor, of the Baltimore Conference, were appointed missionaries to California; the former settled at Sacramento, and the latter at San Francisco. They were presently followed by Rev. S. D. Symonds, of the Michigan; Edward Bannister, of the Genesee; and M. C. Briggs, of Erie Conference, and others. It was a glorious opportunity for men who were equal to it: weak men would have gone down out of sight at once and for ever in these surging rapids. From the present stand-point it appears that God selected these pioneers Himself, and He makes no mistakes.

They were men fit to found states and empires; men who could stand steady in the wildest torrents of speculation, holding their faith and their mission of more value than all the gold in the *placers* and gulches. They thundered the Law and shouted the Gospel into the ears of the hurrying crowds on street-corners; invaded the gambling hells, and preached Jesus and the resurrection to gangs of half-crazed cut-throats and adventurers; set up a Christian newspaper, "The California Christian Advocate," and made it the organ of liberty, education, righteousness, and orthodoxy; hunted barbarism out of its gaudy palaces, and drove it into dens and caves; and fairly wrenched the mastery of those golden shores from the grasp of libertinism and atheism, and gave it over to the hands of men whose consciences they had at last succeeded in waking up.

"To Methodism," says Bishop Peck, "belongs the honour of saving the State of California to freedom. Until recently it was equal there to all the other Protestant denominations put together. The style of the people," he continues, "enters into the history of the Church. California is an exhilarating country. Its people are free, chivalrous, the opposite of all hypocrisy." If a man were wicked, he did not deny it—that would be mean.

When these men became Christians, they brought these same characteristics into the Church with them. They expected to pay their way at Church as much as at a theatre. Our "penny collections" at the old Powell Street Church used to amount to £5 a Sunday, all in silver and gold."

It was in 1860 that the Board of Bishops requested Dr. Jesse T. Peck (now Bishop Peck) to go out to California, and for eight years he served the Church as pastor and presiding elder.

Methodism also holds a fort in Mormondom. On Sunday, the 15th of May, 1870, the Methodist Episcopal Church held its first service in the Mormon capital. On that day the Rev. Gustavus M. Pierce, of the Central New York Conference, under appointment from Bishop Ames, as Superintendent of Missions for Utah, opened his commission at Independence Hall, Salt Lake City, being assisted by the Rev. Dr. Robert M. Hatfield and the Rev. Dr. Charles H. Fowler, who were at that time pastors in the city of Chicago, and who stopped, on their way to the Pacific coast, to witness the planting of this notable vine. An unfinished hayloft over a livery stable in a stone building, thirty feet by a hundred, known as Faust's Hall, was presently engaged for a year as a place of meeting, at a rental of six hundred dollars, and here public worship, the Sabbath-school, class-meetings, and other Methodist services, were held until the basement rooms of the new church building were ready for occupancy in December, 1871.

The coming of the Methodist Episcopal Church was hailed with delight by the territorial authorities of Utah and the few "Gentiles" who had settled there. Its traditions had already prepared its way in the minds of these first settlers, and one of the apostate Mormons, on meeting the Methodist missionary, said to him, "I have heard much of the Methodist Church, and have been surprised that it has passed by Utah so long." On the other hand, the Mormon authorities looked upon these missionaries with unspeakable displeasure then; but the days were over when "Danites" and "Destroying Angels" could murder their neighbours with safety. The reign of law, as well as of Gospel missions, had begun. A Mormon editor of Salt Lake said to Colonel Morrow, then commandant at the United States post near Salt Lake City: "We Mormons can fight your soldiers, we are not afraid of you; but these Methodists, with their network of circuits, we are afraid of. If they can reach and influence our people, they are the most dreaded by us of any of our foes." The Mor-

mon apostle, Brigham Young, after pretending to despise the Methodists, and saying, "They can tell all they know about religion in five minutes," at length changed his mode of speech, and said to one of them, "You Methodist preachers and people are doing more to injure us through your papers, and in your pulpits at Washington and elsewhere, than all else. We shall fight you to the bitter end." The Methodists had now furnished the first essential requisite to the converts from Mormonism; namely, a Christian church and school, in which to bring up their children. So long as apostate Mormons were transformed from Latter-Day Saints into out-breaking sinners or blatant infidels, Young and his elders were not alarmed; but now that their people were in danger of being translated from Mormons into Methodists, they began to bestir themselves to prevent, as far as possible, the progress of this new enterprise. But all in vain. Methodism now has a spacious and elegant church in the Mormon capital, a flourishing academy, and a full-fledged Conference of ministers and churches growing at a hopeful rate. With Methodism as the chief spiritual power, and the new anti-polygamy law in force, better days are in store for Utah.

The only essential change in the constitution of the Methodist Episcopal Church since its organization in 1784 was the admission of lay delegates to the General Conference, such delegates appearing for the first time at the Brooklyn General Conference of 1872. Ever since the secession which formed the Methodist Protestant Church in 1828, and that which became the Wesleyan Methodist New Connection in 1843, the fact that the ecclesiastical affairs of the great Methodist body were wholly managed by the clergy was a subject of more or less agitation; not, however, because of any actual abuse of power on their part, but because it was feared there might sometime be such an abuse. In 1860, a newspaper called "The Methodist" was founded in the interest of lay delegation, of which Rev. Dr. George R. Crooks was the first editor, whose persistent advocacy of that measure for nearly twelve years was one of the chief reasons for its ultimate success. In 1868 the General Conference submitted to the entire membership of the Church a plan for the admission of laymen to their body, which was approved by the

very small vote of 100,000 for, and 50,000 against, showing how very far from universal was the interest in this much-debated question. More than three-fourths of the ministry voted for the measure, and thus the change was at length effected, admitting two laymen from each Annual Conference to seats in the General Conference as co-ordinate members, with the right of voting as a separate house upon the demand, therefore, of two-thirds of their own number. The working of this system thus far leaves no room to doubt its wisdom.

The month of October, 1866, was celebrated throughout the Methodist Episcopal Church as the one hundredth anniversary of American Methodism. The first Sunday of the year was specially appointed to be observed as a day of thanksgiving, praise, and prayer; and throughout the entire year, memorial meetings, centennial celebrations, and every species of appropriate services were held; at the most, if not all, of which there were thank-offerings in the form of contributions to general or local Church enterprises. It was a time for paying Church debts, raising college endowments, erecting and establishing new churches, schools, etc., notable among which was Heck Hall, for the use of the Garrett Biblical Institute, at Evanston, Ill.; the theological institution founded by the liberality of Mrs. Eliza (Clark) Garrett, of Chicago; Drew Theological Seminary, at Madison, N.J., the gift of the late Daniel Drew; the Centenary Biblical Institute, at Baltimore, for the training of coloured men for the ministry; the Centenary Collegiate Institute, at Hackettstown, N.J.; the Centenary Church, Chicago; and large numbers of smaller enterprises of like character all over the country, both North and South. The Centenary Committee, appointed by the bishops to have charge of the celebration, asked for an aggregate of £200,000 for general educational interests, but for the most part the liberality of the people turned in the direction of local Church interests; the entire centenary collections and subscriptions reaching the enormous amount, in round numbers, of £400,000.

The following statistics from Simpson's "Cyclopædia of Methodism," indicate the growth of the denomination, as well as of the bodies which had separated from it:—

“ There were in 1866, as the product of a century’s toil, 9 bishops, 64 Annual Conferences, 7,576 itinerant and 8,602 local preachers ; total members, 1,032,184 ; church edifices, 10,462, valued at \$29,594,004 ; * parsonages, 3,314, valued at \$4,420,958 ; * Sunday-schools, 14,045 ; scholars, 980,622 ; foreign missionaries, 222 ; members in foreign lands, 7,478 ; domestic missionaries, 303, having a membership of 26,075 ; 2 theological seminaries, 23 colleges, and 77 seminaries and female colleges ; 77 instructors, 22,305 students ; educational property, valued at \$7,898,239 ; * 2 book concerns in New York and Cincinnati, with 7 depositories in as many different cities. The capital stock of the book concern, \$1,213,327 ; * official Church papers, 16 ; unofficial, 6 ; bound volumes of books issued by the book concern, 2,548 ; tracts of various sizes, 1,037.” Eight other Methodist bodies number 4,859 travelling ministers, 8,788 local preachers, and 980,604 members.

* These sums amount respectively to nearly £6,000,000, £890,000, £1,580,000, and £244,060.

CHAPTER XXIV.

METHODISM AFTER JOHN WESLEY.

HAVING now traced the history of the chief bodies of Methodists that have been the outgrowth of Methodism in the United States, let us turn to the record of modern British Methodism.

It was quite confidently predicted that the death of Wesley would be followed by a general break-up among his people, a prophecy which had a very narrow escape from fulfilment.

On the 30th of March, 1791, twenty-eight days after Wesley's death, a document known as "The Halifax Circular," concocted by a little company of Methodist preachers under the lead of William Thompson, the assistant on the Halifax Circuit, was promulgated, which proposed a constitution for Methodism on the basis of Mr. Wesley's Deed of Declaration. Its chief features were the filling of vacancies in the "Legal Hundred" by seniority, and the appointment of different committees, on which all the circuits in the three kingdoms should be represented, to manage the affairs of their respective districts from one Annual Conference to another. Each of these committees was to choose its own president, who was to submit the action of his committee during the year to the review and judgment of the Conference at its next ensuing session.

This proposition was a signal for battle, since it secured to the Conference the entire control of general Methodist affairs, to the exclusion of the boards of chapel trustees, among whom there was a strong combination for the avowed purpose of capturing and controlling the pulpits of the Connection.

The English Methodists had become divided into two parties on the question of sacraments; one, called by their

opponents the "High-church party," demanding that the original status of Methodism as a society within, and subordinate to, the Established Church, should be maintained; the other, significantly named "Dissenters," claiming that Methodism had a life and mission of its own. The former desired to keep in the good graces of the Church by limiting the functions of the itinerant preachers to the work of lay evangelists; while the masses of the membership could not see why their ministers were not just as good as parish parsons, and entitled to celebrate the sacraments as well as to preach the Gospel.

Methodism was now over fifty years of age, and a large proportion of its members had been born within its fold. There were many others who had never been Episcopalians at all, but were brought in from the outside world; while a few, usually the wealthier and more ambitious members of the Societies, still clung with great tenacity to the Establishment. From among this latter class the financial officers were naturally selected, and it was the desire of these, now that their chief was dead, to control the affairs of the Connection. Accordingly, the "Halifax Circular," in the interest of the preachers, was quickly followed by the "Hull Circular," in the interest of the chapel trustees, and the battle of circulars was kept up till the session of the first post-Wesleyan Conference.

The Conference of 1791, being the forty-eighth, was opened at Manchester, on the 26th of July. More than three hundred preachers were present, and all who were in full connection were allowed the privileges of membership, according to Wesley's request. William Thompson, of Halifax, was chosen president, and Dr. Thomas Coke was made secretary.

One of its first acts was to establish a system of districts, each comprising from three to eight circuits, giving to England seventeen districts, to Scotland two, to Ireland five, and to Wales one. As a substitute for the chief episcopal function hitherto exercised by Mr. Wesley—that of stationing the preachers—it was determined that the ministers in full connection in each district should meet at the call and under the presidency of their chairman, and should elect one of their number to represent them in a stationing committee.

This committee was required to meet at the place appointed for the session of the Conference at least three days previous to its opening, to prepare and report a plan for stationing the preachers in England and Scotland; and a similar committee was appointed for the Irish Conference, whose president was still to be elected from, and sent over by, the British Conference, and who was to be an *ex-officio* member of the Irish stationing committee.

This arrangement was reached with so much unanimity and good feeling, that the troublesome question of the sacraments was by common consent passed over, and for the time being it was agreed "to follow strictly the plan which Mr. Wesley left us at his death."

At this Conference 326 preachers received appointments, 109 of whom were married men, and a provision was made for the support of their families. Twelve candidates were admitted on trial, and fifteen were placed on the reserve list as not being immediately needed, but entitled to come in on trial as vacancies might occur. The number of members reported in the Societies of the United Kingdom was 72,468, besides 6,525 in the mission societies in British America and the West Indies. The increase in membership during the year was reported to be 1,825.

The official relations of the ministers to each other had now been well adjusted; but no sooner had the Conference adjourned, than the old dissensions broke out again among the people.

What was meant by "the plan which Mr. Wesley left us at his death"? "It means," said the conservatives, "that the Methodists, like Mr. Wesley, should be loyal to the Establishment." "No," said the others, "it means that we shall go on doing just as we did during Mr. Wesley's lifetime."

The one party would have Methodism go back to what it was in the mind of their great leader before the pressure of its increasing greatness forced him into certain variations from the Church; the other pointed out the direction in which Mr. Wesley was moving during the last years of his life, and determined to keep on in it toward liberty and independence.

"The Church of England," said the conservatives, "allows

no man except ordained priests to administer the Lord's Supper." "But Mr. Wesley himself ordained some of his own preachers for that very purpose," answered the liberals; "and, what is more, there are some chapels in which the sacraments have been administered by Methodist preachers who have not been ordained." "But we hold the property," said the conservatives, "and are determined to maintain Church discipline." "And I am resolved," said Adam Clarke—expressing the purpose of the whole progressive party, both among ministers and laymen—"I am resolved to have liberty of conscience, or go to the ends of the earth for it." "No man shall preach in the chapels which we control, who ventures to trespass on the rights of the clergy," said the "old plan" party. "And I," said Adam Clarke, "will administer the sacraments where the people desire it, and take the consequences."

It was the same old question over again—Do the sacraments rightfully belong to the people, or are they the prerogatives of the clergy?

Year after year the High-church party lost ground. Thus, for instance, at the Conference of 1793, at Leeds, it was agreed, by way of compromise, that "no gowns, cassocks, bands, or surplices shall be worn by any," and that "the title of 'Reverend' shall not be used by us toward each other in the future." On the other hand, it was conceded that full membership in the Conference, and the appointment thereby to administer the sacraments, should be a sufficient ordination without any imposition of hands; and that the sacraments should be celebrated in those Societies which unanimously desired them."

A sharper bargain than this, under the name of "compromise," was rarely ever driven in the ecclesiastical market, and the High-church party were not long in coming to a sense of it. But soon the "Dissenters" were troubled with the word "unanimous" in the treaty, whereby a single member of the Society could outvote all the rest, and they moved for, and secured, the re-establishment of the status which existed at Wesley's death; namely, that the sacraments should be again administered in those chapels where they had formerly been enjoyed. In 1794 there were nearly one hundred

Methodist Societies in which the sacraments were celebrated by their preachers, without reference to whether they had been ordained or not in the manner prescribed in the Prayer Book; and in view of this irregular state of things the High-church party, claiming to represent “the people”—though it was notorious that the people generally demanded the sacraments—organized themselves into a body, and, as custodians of the property of the Societies, attempted to push the Societies into conformity with their views. The Conference, at its session in 1794, reaffirmed its statement that “imposition of hands is not essential to ordination, but merely a circumstance, although generally a suitable and significant one; the act of admission into the ministry, so as to be devoted wholly to it, and to exercise the pastoral charge, being the true scriptural ordination both to preach the word and to administer the sacraments, thus giving an official status to the regular members of the Conference, though one which the High-church party would not recognize.”

As a specimen of the proceedings of the High-church party, the case of the trustees of the Bristol Circuit will be of interest. The chapels in this circuit were among the very small number whose trust deeds had not been drawn according to Wesley’s plan, and these the trustees turned into a citadel in which to defend the power of property against the will of the people. At the Conference of 1794 the stationing committee had set down Joseph Benson as president of the Bristol Circuit, with Messrs. Rodda, Vasey, and Moore as associate preachers. Benson was one of the leaders in the High-church party, and Vasey had been ordained a clergyman, while Moore was a sturdy defender of the rights of the preachers to administer the sacraments, and, as we have seen, was also an advocate of the plan of setting up an episcopacy of their own.

The Portland Street Chapel, in Bristol, was regularly “settled,” and Mr. Moore, soon after his arrival, celebrated the Lord’s Supper there, whereupon the trustees of the circuit served a notice upon him forbidding him to preach in the other two chapels, on the ground that the right to fill those two pulpits was not vested in the Conference, but in the trustees. The next Sunday Mr. Moore appeared in one of the forbidden pulpits, related the action of the trustees, and

then took his departure for the Portland Street Chapel, almost the whole congregation following him. From this time Bristol became the centre of controversial interest. Another campaign of circulars and addresses followed, in which the trustees of over fifty of the hundred and fifteen circuits set themselves up to defy the Conference, and, as very soon appeared, separated themselves from the people; for of the one thousand members of the Bristol Circuit over eight hundred sustained Mr. Moore, and straightway set about building another chapel. Upon this Dr. Coke went down to Bristol to aid his friend Mr. Moore, while Benson, Rodda, and Vasey took sides with the trustees.

To add to the general confusion the Rev. Alexander Kilham, then superintendent of the Aberdeen Circuit, struck out and circulated another new constitution for Methodism, the purpose of which was to reform the Methodist body by giving the laity a very much larger share of power and office. It is interesting to note how largely some of his views have now prevailed, though at that time they were regarded as revolutionary and destructive. But Mr. Kilham fell into the frequent error of reformers of over-estimating the importance and value of his measures, in the defence of which he made such free use of the English tongue against those who disagreed with him, that he brought himself under the censure of the Conference, and was at length expelled from the Connection.

It is impossible to avoid the conclusion that Mr. Wesley, at one time, intended an episcopal form of organization for the British as well as for the American Conference; for, as we have seen, not only did he ordain Dr. Coke as "superintendent" for America, but he also ordained Alexander Mather to the same office, and with the same title, for service in Great Britain, in addition to the considerable number of men whom he ordained as *elders* for home and foreign fields.

"Superintendent" Mather, at his ordination in 1788, was one of the fathers of the Conference—a man who is described in the official notice inserted in the Conference Minutes after his death as "a perfect master of all the *minutiæ* of doctrine and discipline of Methodism." "Hereby," says the record, "he was enabled to afford Mr. Wesley very consider-

able assistance in the superintendence of the Societies. His wisdom and experience, his courage and perseverance, rendered him an invaluable friend to our Connection during some late troubles under which he suffered. He was never intimidated by any fear of calumny from pursuing those plans which he conceived to tend towards the peace and union of the Societies. His noble soul was elevated above the momentary opinion of a party. He looked only at the interests and glory of the Redeemer's kingdom, and waited for his reward in a better world.* Such was the bishop chosen and ordained by Wesley to succeed himself, whom the Conference deliberately rejected; and Mather, after vainly presenting himself to his brethren in the name of the historic and apostolic orders conferred upon him, modestly resumed his place among them, and finished a godly and successful ministry as an itinerant preacher of forty-two years. His death occurred in 1800, nine years after that of Wesley.

On the 2nd of April, 1794, Messrs. Coke, Mather, Pawson, Taylor, Moore, Richardson, Bradburn, Rogers, and Adam Clarke held a private consultation at Lichfield, and drafted a memorial to the Conference, setting forth the fact that Methodism possessed an episcopacy in the persons of Drs. Coke and Mather, whom Mr. Wesley had ordained as “superintendents,” and proposed that, without any avowed separation from the Church of England, “there be an order of superintendents appointed by the Conference, by whom lay preachers who desired, and all who should thereafter be admitted into full connection, should be ordained.” It was also proposed that “Superintendents” Coke and Mather should ordain six other superintendents, who should preside respectively over the eight districts into which the Connection should be divided; their location being subject to annual change at the pleasure of the Conference.†

But this scheme was destined to fail for three reasons: first, because it would have set up another order of aristocracy, of which thing there was too much already, both

* “Minutes,” vol. ii., p. 82.

† Dr. Clarke's notes of this meeting, taken on the spot, are given in his life by Dr. Etheridge, p. 146. In this document the names of the persons present are given as above. Several of them are called “Drs.,” but on what grounds does not appear.

in Church and State ; second, the plan was proposed by eight men, seven of whom announced themselves as candidates for the episcopal office ; and third, the High-church party regarded this as of all others the most schismatic and revolutionary course which the Methodists could pursue, and therefore rallied all their forces against it.

In the height of the general excitement over the Bristol usurpation, the trustees' manifesto, and the Kilhamite republican constitution, the Conference of 1795 met at Manchester, at which place also assembled a committee of sixty-seven laymen, representing the local boards of chapel trustees, who were sent to the seat of the Conference to enforce their demands upon it. Realizing the momentous issues which were impending, the Conference commenced the session with a day of solemn fasting and prayer, after which they appointed a committee of nine to prepare some satisfactory plan of settlement. The method of this election was as follows : Each member of the Conference received nine slips of paper, on each of which he was to write one name, with the understanding that the nine men whose names appeared on the largest number of papers should constitute the proposed committee. This vote resulted in the choice of Joseph Bradford, the President of the Conference, John Pawson, Alexander Mather, Thomas Coke, the Secretary, William Thompson, the hero of the Halifax circular, Samuel Bradburn, Joseph Benson, Henry Moore, and Adam Clarke. The committee represented all shades of opinion, and the list of names is interesting as showing who were the nine leading minds among the Methodist preachers of that day.

Meanwhile the lay delegates were making anything but a creditable exhibition of themselves. The evil spirit of dissension goeth not forth except by prayer and fasting, and the laymen had not followed the example of the Conference in that respect. They met and wrangled until they split into two opposite factions, after which they held separate sessions ; but with all their deliberations they brought forth nothing but wind. The Conference treated them with all possible courtesy, receiving and replying to their demands, till finally the committee above mentioned brought in a " Plan of Pacification," which was at length, with a few

modifications, unanimously adopted by the Conference, and also by a large majority of the trustee delegates.

This famous plan provided that the sacraments should be continued wherever they had already been administered, but that in order to such service in any new place the consent of the Conference should first be obtained, which consent should not be given unless it were requested by a majority of the chapel trustees and of the stewards of the Society in question, or by a majority of the stewards alone in cases where Societies possessed no chapels.

The question of holding service in church hours, which had been a chief bone of contention, was also referred to the local trustees and stewards, but no Society was to celebrate the Lord's Supper on the same day and hour at which it was celebrated at the parish church, and no preacher was to be permitted to officiate therein, except those who had been duly authorised by the Conference for that office. It was provided that the Lord's Supper should always be administered in England according to the form of the Established Church, but the person who administered it should have full liberty to give out hymns and use exhortation and extempore prayer ; and also that whenever divine service was performed in England on the Lord's day in church hours the officiating preacher should read either the service of the Established Church, Wesley's abridgement thereof, or the lessons appointed by the Calendar.

The second section of the plan was “concerning discipline.” It provided that the appointment of preachers should remain wholly with the Conference ; that no trustee or any number of trustees should expel or exclude from their chapel or chapels any preacher so appointed ; that an offending preacher who was believed by a majority of the trustees or stewards or leaders to be “immoral, erroneous in doctrine, or deficient in abilities,” should be tried by a court comprising all the preachers of his district, and trustees and stewards and leaders of the circuit to which he belonged; and if

* In 1797 it was affirmed that only ministers could sit on the District Committee Meetings, and that in case a minister was accused in any way, stewards, trustees, or leaders could only be admitted as *evidence*. Every Methodist preacher has a right to be tried by his peers.

adjudged guilty by a majority of this court, he was to be removed, and the district to appoint another preacher in his place, to serve until the next session of the Conference.

In order to prevent further mischief of the kind which this plan was designed to correct, it was finally agreed that any preacher who should disturb the peace of the Society by discussions of the relative merits of the "new or old plan" should be tried as above; and any local preacher, trustee, steward or leader convicted of a like offence by the circuit conference *should be expelled from the Society*. Thus peace was established, and war declared against any who ventured to disturb it.

In order that there might be a well-understood basis for the operation of this new plan, Mr. John Pawson set about compiling and codifying the proceedings and decisions of the Wesleyan Conferences from the Annual Minutes thereof, which compilation, under the name of "Large Minutes," was reported to, and adopted by, the Conference of 1797. All the preachers present except one signed a declaration solemnly engaging to comply with this code of laws "as essential to the existence of Methodism;" and thus the Conference became possessed of a written constitution, which, with various additions and amendments, remains in force to this day.

Believers in strong governments could hardly fail to be pleased with this Methodist Constitution: these were, indeed, stringent measures, and in view of the excited state of the English people, caused by the commotions which in France were so rapidly tending to revolution, as well as on account of the internal dissensions of the Methodist Societies themselves, it was no wonder that in some cases the pacification failed to pacify.

Mr. Alexander Kilham and his party denounced the new measure as a clerical usurpation of the rights of the laity, which they were bound as intelligent Christians to resist, and as a matter of course the Conference had no alternative but to try him for dissension, according to the plan. After giving him space for repentance, the final penalty was inflicted by the Conference in 1796, whereupon Mr. William Thompson and four others joined him, and these six preachers set up "The New Connection," in which they sought to put

in operation their democratic views of Church government. But for this the time was not yet ripe, and two of the five, namely, Michael Emmett and Henry Taylor, soon returned to the Conference.

The Wesleyan movement having now safely weathered the point where its enemies had hoped to see it wrecked, certain of them set themselves to work to write it down ; but under the labours of such men as Benson, Bramwell, and Olivers, in England ; Ouseley and Graham, in Ireland ; Jones and Davis, in Wales, the three kingdoms were, during the fifteen years immediately succeeding the death of Mr. Wesley, lighted up with glorious revivals of religion ; while Dr. Coke, who was a whole missionary society in himself, was extending his outposts through destitute regions at home and abroad, collecting money or giving his own, finding out suitable men, and keeping the whole body astir by the brilliancy of his efforts and the splendour of his success. Some of the fathers were falling, but their sons were rising to take their places. Already Jabez Bunting and Richard Watson were beginning to show great promise of power, while Dr. Adam Clarke, by means of his almost unequalled scholarship, was bringing great honour to the Wesleyan body, of which, after the Wesleys and Dr. Coke, he must be counted the brightest ornament.

The partisans of the State Church had tried to stamp out this Methodist fire, but they only succeeded in spreading it more widely ; then they tried letting it alone, but still it went on increasing, till in the year 1800 one of the British reviewers began to toll the alarm bell. After showing that the Methodist body had multiplied from 29,406 in 1770, to 109,961 in 1800, and that it was increasing steadily at the rate of 7000 members per annum, the writer of the article cries out, "How long will it be before this people begins to count hands with the Establishment ?"

"No works in this country," he continues, "are so widely circulated, and studied by so many thousand readers, as the Evangelical and Methodist Magazines ;" which periodicals, he affirms, "produce evil, great evil, nothing but evil ; tend to narrow the judgment, debase the intellect, and harden the heart." He declares that Methodism has "a confederated and indefatigable priesthood, who barely tolerate literature,

and actually hate it, and upon whom their systems and ideas are as mildewing superstition, blasting all genius in the bud, and withering every flower of loveliness and of innocent enjoyment."

It was time something was done to prevent these terrible Methodists from saving so many sinners! Their success was shaming the Establishment itself! Accordingly, in May, 1811, Lord Sidmouth, in the House of Lords, moved for leave to bring in a bill which he called "An Act to explain and render more effectual certain Acts of the First Year of King William and Queen Mary, and of the Nineteenth Year of the reign of His present Majesty, so far as the same relate to Protestant Dissenting Ministers."

The noble lord explained that the "Act of Toleration" had been so construed that a great many persons had obtained licences to preach, who were not well qualified for such work. He lamented the great increase in Dissenting ministers, and declared it to be his belief that no person ought to be allowed to preach who was not in "holy orders," and the regular pastor of some local congregation; which, as any one might see, was a blow aimed at the itinerants, who, with their friends, were not slow to take the alarm. In their resistance to this attempt on the religious liberties of Great Britain, they brought out the following report from the Church authorities:—

Total number of churches and chapels of the Church of	
England	2,547
Total number of dissenting chapels	3,457
	<hr/>
Balance agains the Establishment	910

By this showing, the Establishment, instead of being in any but a political sense the Church of England, was the Church of only about two-fifths of England. Lord Sidmouth was evidently too late with his bill. It belonged to an age that was passed—the age of the "Five Mile Act" and the "Act of Toleration." The State Church, with all its prestige of wealth, power, and tradition, was already in the minority, and this attempt of the minority to abridge the rights of the majority in matters where men were beginning to feel themselves free and equal, awoke such a storm of indignation,

that the House which had given the noble lord permission to bring in his bill soon gave him permission to take it out again; and on the 29th of July, 1812, both Houses of Parliament passed, and the King approved, a “Civil Liberty Bill,” recognizing the “inalienable right of every man to worship God agreeably to the dictates of his own conscience, and that he has the right to hear and teach those truths which he conscientiously believes, without any restraint or prejudicial interference from the civil magistrates, provided he does not thereby disturb the peace of the community. Thus, after three-quarters of a century of persecution for righteousness’ sake, Methodism became a Church, if not *the* Church of England.

At the Conference of 1814 the working of the “Deed of Declaration” was so far modified that of every four vacancies occurring in the Legal Hundred three were to be filled according to seniority, as before, while one was to be filled by the ballot of those ministers who had been for fourteen years* in regular service in the itinerancy. The President and the Secretaries of the Conference were also to be elected by this body of elders, instead of by the “Legal Hundred.” At this date the number of Wesleyan ministers, which at the death of Wesley was only two hundred and ninety-one, had increased to the number of eight hundred and forty-two; and this change, by which the growth of an “order of the ancients” was checked, was a measure evidently needed. Small as these concessions were, they averted the threatened disturbances growing out of this concentration of power, and the Church was once more at peace.

At the Conference of 1834 another important change was made, namely, that of ordaining the ministers who were received into full connection in the Conference. Hitherto that service had been declared a mere form; but its manifest propriety, as well as the almost universal custom of Christendom, at length prevailed in the Wesleyan body, and the thirty young men who were that year received were ordained by the President of the Conference, assisted by the ex-President and Secretary; the following formula being used:—

* At a later period, ten years.

“Mayest thou receive the Holy Ghost for the office and work of a Christian minister now committed unto thee by the imposition of our hands, and be thou a faithful dispenser of the word of God and of His Holy Sacraments, in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost.” This mode of ordination is still in use.

The list of preachers on trial at the Conference of 1779 contains two names destined to be held in immortal honour: namely, Jabez Bunting and Robert Newton. The former of these, next to Wesley himself, was the most imperial spirit which ever ruled the Wesleyan Connection, and right worthily as well as efficiently did he continue the magisterial succession.

Jabez Bunting was born in the quiet village of Moneyash, in Derbyshire, in the year 1779. His mother, a devoted Methodist, gave him to God in his infancy, trained him up to attend all the means of grace, and at the age of fifteen had the blessed satisfaction of seeing him received as a full member of the Methodist Society.

The talents of the boy attracted the attention of Dr. Percival, an eminent physician of Manchester, with whose son he had become intimate at school, and he gave him first a position in his own house as a medical student and amanuensis, then made arrangements for his graduating at one of the continental universities; after which he promised to introduce him to a medical practice in Manchester worth £700 a year. But the hand of God was on him, and, forsaking all these brilliant prospects, he gladly gave himself to the work of a Methodist itinerant, and at the age of twenty was admitted to the Conference on trial, and appointed by Mr. Wesley to the Oldham Circuit.

The young man at once took rank as a brilliant and powerful preacher; indeed, it has been said of him that he “started on his course of preaching at an elevation which precluded the reasonable hope of any future marked improvement.” His second attempt at a sermon, which was in a farm cottage, on the text, “Ye believe in God, believe also in me,” was ever afterward ranked as among the greatest and best of his whole life.

In view of the rapid advancement of this young man it

was sometimes enviously said that he was "born under a fortunate star." However this may have been, his rare endowments and his sagacity in making the most of his opportunities easily kept him at the front, even with such competitors as Robert Newton, Joseph Benson, Richard Watson, and Adam Clarke, and for many years he was almost the autocrat of the Conference, a position which he held because of his manifest fitness for it, but one which could not fail to call out some very sore complaints from certain men who, unlike him, were not born to command, but who still did not like to obey. One of the men who had felt the weight of his hand as an administrator of the law, and therefore could not have been prejudiced in his favour, said of him: "If Jabez Bunting had devoted himself to politics instead of preaching, he might have been Prime Minister of England."

At the death of Dr. Coke, Jabez Bunting, then the chairman of the Leeds District, helped to establish the Leeds Missionary Society; which was soon followed by similar organizations in the Halifax, York, Sheffield, Cornwall, and Newcastle Districts. The general Wesleyan Missionary Society was then formed, of which for eighteen years Mr. Bunting was the secretary and controlling spirit. Under the amendments to the Deed of Declaration, made in 1814, he was the first man elected into the "Legal Hundred" by general ballot, and at the same time and in the same manner he was elected Secretary of the Conference: a most notable honour in that body of seniors for a young man only thirty-five years of age.

"His preaching," says Stevens, "was methodical, perspicuous, rich in scriptural citation, usually more logical than eloquent, but sometimes overwhelmingly powerful, producing visible effects, so that large numbers together were cut to the heart, and cried out, 'Men and brethren, what shall we do?'" He was robust and dignified in stature, with calm features, a noble brow, a clear, sonorous voice. His gestures were few, and as simple as possible; he stood erect in the pulpit, was never hurried, and never lacked the appropriate word. A good judge, who heard him often, said 'Other preachers excelled him in some points, but none that

I have ever heard has equalled him as a whole.' Adam Clarke excelled him in learning, Newton in popular eloquence, Watson in theological analysis and sublime speculative thought, but he surpassed them all in counsel, in administrative talents, in varied practical ability, and they, in common with all his brethren, spontaneously conceded to him the leadership of their common cause."

[In the year 1834, "one minister, who had entered upon a course of public agitation for the separation of the Church from the State, and had been placed under suspension on that account by his District Meeting, was required, as the condition of his continuance in the body, to desist from the course he had chosen. He determined rather to be a political agitator than a Methodist preacher, and therefore withdrew."

During that year, Dr. Samuel Warren was suspended by his District Meeting for issuing a pamphlet against the establishment of a Theological Institution. He appealed to the Courts of Chancery; and first the Vice-Chancellor, Sir Lancelot Shadwell, and afterwards the Lord Chancellor, Lord Lyndhurst, sustained the action of the District Meeting. He appealed to the Conference of 1835, but, as he refused to acknowledge his errors, was expelled. He was a good, but mistaken man, and, there is little doubt, was misled by others. He joined the Church of England, and died, as Mr. Jackson says, in comparative obscurity.]*

It is not the plan of this volume to enter into the causes or merits of the disruptions of the Wesleyan body, by which the several sections of the great British family have come into existence. No book could possibly be written that would be at all full and fair in all the different judgments to which it would require to be submitted. It is better, in view of the increasing spirit of Christian fraternity among these Methodist communions, all of whom hold the same faith and retain the same itinerant ministry, that the sharp contentions over comparatively minor matters should be gradually forgotten. All of these bodies will have appropriate mention in the chapter concerning the Methodist Ecumenical Conference of 1881.

* "Autobiography of Thomas Jackson," p. 270.

In 1834 the Wesleyan Theological Institution was established, for the training of candidates for the itinerancy, and from that time till his death in 1857 Jabez Bunting was its president. Two volumes of his sermons are among the historic theology of the Methodists, though his fame rests chiefly on his marvellous talents for organization and administration. It was chiefly through his influence that laymen were introduced into the missionary and other committees, a measure which has ever since proved highly advantageous to Methodism in all its operations. He was four times chosen president of the Conference, and ten times elected secretary. He died on the 16th of June, 1858, and his remains were interred in the City Road burial ground. The Rev. Thomas Jackson preached his funeral sermon, in City Road Chapel, on Friday, July 9th, and, by special request, in Manchester and Leeds during the following week.

CHAPTER XXV.

THE FIRST CENTURY OF METHODISM.

THE approach to the year 1839, the hundredth year of Methodism, was the occasion of a great uprising. It was as if the youthful Church were then to pass to its majority, and take its permanent place in history as a grand and providential success; and in honour of that era it was determined that "something great should be done," not only as a memorial of God's goodness to the Wesleyan communion in the past, but as a substantial addition to its appliances for carrying on its work in the future.

With this purpose in view the Conference in 1837 appointed a committee of ministers and laymen to prepare a plan of operations, and at the session of 1838 they brought in their report, "that the primary object of the jubilee should be the religious and devotional improvement of the centenary by public service among the churches and chapels of the denomination; and that in connection with this object there should be a general pecuniary contribution for some of the principal interests of the Church, as a thank-offering to Almighty God." An extraordinary spirit of liberality seemed to be infused into the Connection, and it was determined to make an effort to raise, for its various pressing requirements, the sum of £80,000, to which end a system of central meetings was organized, from which the whole body was to be reached.

At the first of these great general meetings, which was held in the Oldham Street Chapel, Manchester, on the 7th of November, 1838, and the two following days, the subscription to the Centenary Fund amounted, with the gifts sent in by absent friends, to about £40,000! half the sum expected from the entire Connection. Ten thousand pounds were sub-

scribed in a single day at City Road Chapel, London; Bristol and Birmingham followed with over £11,000; the other central meetings were no way behind, while the smaller Societies on every hand responded to the appeal with unexampled liberality. Even Ireland, though oppressed with poverty, gave £14,500; and the sum continued to enlarge by private gifts and public contributions until it reached the amazing total of £216,000, or \$1,080,000, nearly one-tenth of which was the gift of the itinerant Methodist preachers.

The final distribution of this glorious thank-offering gave to the Wesleyan Theological Institution, in round numbers, £72,000; to the Missionary Society, £70,000; to the Centenary Chapel Relief Fund, £39,000; to the Worn-out Ministers and Widows' Relief Fund, £16,000; the remainder being divided between the building of a missionary ship for use among the South Sea Islands, the relief of the Irish chapels, the Wesleyan Education Society, and the British and Foreign Bible Society.

This was a time at which to recount the victories of the hundred years' campaign. When Wesley arose and girded himself for the onset, the Church was still asleep. There was not even a Missionary Society, or a Bible Society, or a Tract Society, or a Sunday-school in existence; but Wesley sounded the trumpet, organized his plans, headed the advance himself, and along the line of his progress, and largely by his personal direction, these great systems of Christian effort took their rise in Great Britain.*

At the Centenary Conference, which met at Liverpool, July 31st, 1839, there were one hundred and eighteen candidates for admission to the itinerant ministry, and the increase of membership of the Societies for the closing year of the first Methodist century was over sixteen thousand souls. The entire British Wesleyan membership was as follows: Great Britain, 307,068; Ireland, 26,383; Mission stations, 72,727: Total, 406,178.

* As early as 1779, a quarter of a century anterior to the British and Foreign Bible Society, Wesleyan Methodists formed the Naval and Military Bible Society, which afterward obtained high patronage, and is still an effective institution. This was the first of existing Bible Societies, of which there are about fifty in various parts of the world.—*Stevens's "History of Methodism."*

Wesley died at the head of a thoroughly organized host of 550 itinerant preachers and 140,000 members of his Societies in the United Kingdom, in British North America, in the United States, and in the West Indies. About half a century later it had grown to more than 1,171,000, including about 5,200 itinerant preachers, in the Wesleyan and Methodist Episcopal Churches; and, including the various bodies bearing the names of Methodists, to an army of more than 1,400,000, of whom 6,080 were itinerant preachers. Its missionaries, accredited members of different Conferences, were about three hundred and fifty, with nearly an equal number of salaried, and about three thousand unpaid, assistants. They occupied about three hundred stations, each station being the head of a circuit. They were labouring in Sweden, Germany, France, Cadiz, Gibraltar, and Malta, Western and Southern Africa, Ceylon, Continental India, New South Wales, Van Diemen's Land, New Zealand, Fiji Islands, the West Indies. They had under instruction in their mission schools about fifty thousand pupils; in their mission churches were more than seventy thousand communicants; and at least two hundred thousand persons heard the Gospel regularly in their mission chapels. The Methodist missionaries were now more numerous than the whole Wesleyan ministry as enrolled on the minutes of Wesley's last Conference, and their mission communicants were about equal to the whole number of Methodists in Europe at that day.

The Centennial Conference revised the plan for the general celebration of the jubilee, and appointed Friday, the 25th of October, to be observed throughout the Connection as the festival day, with prayer-meeting early in the morning, sermons in the forenoon and evening, as on the Sabbath, and jubilees for the poor, and for the children of the Sunday-schools and day-schools, in the afternoon.

When this great day arrived, the whole Methodist world united in a celebration which was never equalled by any Protestant religious body either in its magnificence or its liberality. The aggregate sum contributed by the various Methodist bodies in England and America was more than £340,000, and that, too, without interfering with their

stated collections ; and during a year of almost unparalleled commercial depression.

The Wesleyan Centenary Hall is one of the noble monuments of Methodism and of its centennial munificence. It stands in Bishopsgate Street, in the very heart of London, a stately structure within and without. Its lofty walls are adorned with statues, paintings, and other historic treasures, while in its spacious offices and committee rooms the immense interests of the ever-expanding Connection are fostered and furthered. The cost of this edifice was about thirty thousand pounds.

One of the great characters in this middle era of British Methodism, the demarkation whereof, in point of time, may be reckoned the centennial year, was Richard Watson, whose “Institutes” for over half a century have been the standard in Methodist systematic theology.

He was a native of Lincolnshire, born in 1781. Converted in his youth under the preaching of one of Wesley’s itinerants, and being already a remarkable scholar for his age, and having also an appearance of maturity much beyond his years, he was received by the Conference on trial before he was sixteen years old, and at once attracted great attention. The love of sacred learning was deeply implanted in his soul, and, in spite of feeble health and the heavy duties of his circuit, he kept up his studies in the Greek and Hebrew Scriptures, and in such other branches of religious knowledge as fitted him, perhaps better than any other Methodist of his time, to write the system of doctrine which has done such good service in the Church.

His marriage with a daughter of Alexander Kilham, the leader of the secession already mentioned, was one reason for his leaving the British Conference to become a preacher in the new Connection ; but in 1812 he was welcomed back again to its fellowship for the remainder of his short but brilliant life. In 1821, after distinguished services in the cause of missions, he was made Resident Secretary of the Wesleyan Missionary Society at London, and under his administration, aided by the eloquence of Newton and the statesmanship of Bunting, the annual receipts of that Society increased from seven thousand to fifty thousand

pounds, and the number of its missionaries from fifty to two hundred.

Watson was a spiritually-minded man, and, as a preacher, says Jackson, "at times his conceptions seemed almost super-human." Rev. Robert Hall said of him, "He soars into regions of thought where no genius but his own can penetrate."

His death occurred on the 8th of January, 1833, in the fifty-third year of his age. His life was written, and his works are edited, by the Rev. Thomas Jackson. They comprise thirteen volumes, and include his Theological Institutions, Sermons, Expositions, etc., etc.; but not his Theological Dictionary.

For a body of Christians against whom the charge of a lack of learning was so frequently urged, the Methodists during the first century of their history produced some remarkable scholars, among whom Joseph Benson, the commentator on the Holy Scriptures, holds an honourable place.

He was the son of a Cumberland farmer, born in the year 1748. Converted under the instrumentality of the Methodists when about sixteen years of age, and, being regarded as a lad of much promise, he was advised by the preachers to seek an interview with Mr. Wesley. With this intention he set out on foot for Newcastle-on-Tyne, but on his arrival there was sadly disappointed to find that Mr. Wesley had returned to London; and, not to be defeated, though it was in the depth of winter, he boldly struck out on foot for the metropolis, three hundred miles away. At York he found a man who was so pleased with his courage and his purpose as to pay his fare for the remainder of the journey, and, after waiting some time for Wesley to return from Kingswood, he obtained the wished-for interview.

Finding the young man had received a good education, Wesley sent him to Kingswood as classical tutor, which position he left in 1769, to become the master of Lady Huntingdon's college at Trevecca, under the presidency of the saintly Fletcher; but about the year afterward both Fletcher and Benson were compelled to vacate their positions, because they were both believers in the doctrine of Free Grace, which the Calvinistic Lady Huntingdon had come to regard as a "damnable heresy."

On leaving Trevecca, Benson went to Oxford, with a view to prepare himself a place in the Established Church; but his former connection with the Methodists was a fatal objection in the eyes of the Bishop of Worcester, who refused to allow him to be examined for orders; whereupon the young man presented himself as a candidate for the itinerancy, and was received on trial at the Bristol Conference of 1771.

As a preacher, Benson was plain, vehement, affectionate, and impressive. His sermons were powerful in argument and intensely moving in their effects, especially his applications and closing appeals, in which, it is said, “he appeared like a messenger from the eternal world.” His own mind was so deeply affected with the great truths he uttered, that his audiences could hardly resist the power by which he spoke; often they wept aloud, being overwhelmed by the truth, to which the Holy Spirit Himself bore witness in their hearts; and under his ministry multitudes of souls were turned to repentance, and brought into the enjoyment of saving grace.

Benson’s Commentary, the second of the three great Methodist works of this character during the first century of the Connection, was written at the request of the Conference, the publication of it being commenced in 1811, and finished in 1818. It was regarded as an improvement on the work of Dr. Coke, being distinguished for its excellent Greek exegesis, and its general usefulness for the masses of the people; but it was in turn excelled by that of Dr. Clarke, which was finished in 1826, and which, as the work of one man, covering the whole Bible, has still to find its equal in the English tongue. Mr. Benson’s other principal literary labours were as editor of the “Arminian Magazine,” established by Mr. Wesley; the name of which he changed to the “Methodist Magazine,” and which he conducted with much care and method, if not with great brilliancy and success. The death of Benson occurred on the 25th of January, 1821, in the seventy-third year of his age.

Robert Newton was one of the greatest masters of the art of preaching the Gospel that Methodism ever produced, and, like his friend Bunting, famous chiefly for his labours

in the cause of missions. Bunting was next to Wesley in administrative ability; his intimate friend, Newton, as an advocate, was almost Whitefield over again.

He was born at Roxby, a little sea-coast village in Yorkshire, on the 8th of September, 1780. His parents were zealous Methodists; so were all the eight children; and from among the sons of this notable household, four became preachers of the Gospel. In person Robert Newton was tall and commanding; his voice was deep, mellow, and capable of expressing all shades of feeling; his manner was solemn and impressive: he spoke as one having a message from heaven, and there was about him an atmosphere of sanctity which told of his absolute devotion to, and constant communion with, the Lord. It was during his first appointment in London, at a meeting of the British and Foreign Bible Society, that his power as a platform orator was first discovered. While in the metropolis he also co-operated with Dr. Coke in missionary work, caught the infectious zeal of that tireless man, and during the rest of his life Robert Newton was the most popular advocate of missions in England. He disclaimed any talent for the details of business, but abroad among the people he was without a compeer in the great cause. When he commenced his public labours for the Missionary Society, there were but fifty Wesleyan missionaries, with about seventeen thousand communicants under their care; he lived to see them increased to more than three hundred and fifty missionaries and one hundred thousand communicants.

The British Conference, at its centennial session in 1839, appointed Robert Newton as its representative to the General Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church in 1840, where he was rapturously received, both for his own sake and for the sake of the fraternal body which he so admirably represented. After the Conference was over he made a tour of the principal cities of the Eastern and Middle States, delighting great congregations with his eloquence, and producing a still deeper impression by his sweetness of spirit and his evident communion with heaven.

In 1854, Robert Newton, then in the seventy-fourth year of his age, after nearly fifty-five years of service in the Wes-

leyan ministry, passed on to his reward. His biographer, Jackson, says of him: "He doubtless had faults, but what they were I was never able to discover during an acquaintance of more than half a century."

With the conjunction of such stars in its heaven as Clarke, Bunting, Watson, and Newton, no wonder the light of British Methodism spread far and wide. Under the labours of these eminent men, whose greatness is proved by their love and respect for one another, as well as by the general admiration in which they were held by their brethren and people, that grandest enterprise possible to mortals was mightily advanced. Taking up the work of Wesley and Coke, they planned and pleaded for the evangelization of mankind, and gloriously did the Lord make use of them to that end.

[Several other names of eminence ought to be mentioned here,—the contemporaries or the immediate successors of the above. One of these is that of the Rev. James Dixon, D.D., who was born in a little hamlet called King's Mills, in Leicestershire, Oct. 29th, 1788. He was converted to God on Whitsun-Day, 1807, and soon joined the Methodist Society. He possessed a superior mind, and having entered the Methodist ministry, it was not long ere he took a prominent position in its ranks. He was sent as a missionary to Gibraltar, but was compelled to return home in consequence of the opposition he met with from many quarters. He became a popular preacher with all classes, and in the year 1841 was elected President of the Conference, an office which he filled with great ability. In 1848 he was appointed the representative of British Methodism to the General Conference of America, and on his return home published a work entitled "Methodism in America," which was somewhat widely circulated, especially in the United States. Many descriptions of natural scenery are given in this volume, especially of the Falls of Niagara, which are exceedingly brilliant and effective. Dr. Dixon also visited Canada, where, according to the testimony of Dr. Ryerson, given in 1871, he sowed precious seed, from which a glorious harvest was gathered year after year. Dr. Dixon died in the full triumph of faith, on the 29th of December, 1871.

As a preacher, an opponent of slavery, a missionary advocate, and an uncompromising enemy of popery, he had few equals in Methodism. His presence was commanding, his voice deep and powerful, and he often spoke with such unction that he carried his audience away on a tide of holy emotion, and many were the converts he won for Christ. His life, written by his son, a clergyman of the Church of England, is as beautiful a piece of biography as any minister in Christendom could wish to read.

The Rev. Thomas Jackson, who was born in a thatched cottage at Sancton, a little village in the East Riding of Yorkshire, Dec. 12th, 1783, became one of the most saintly and useful ministers of his time. He was for several years editor of the "Methodist Magazine," subsequently the Theological Tutor at Richmond College, and thrice President of the Conference, an office which he filled with marked ability and force. His sermon on the Centenary of Methodism, preached in Liverpool in 1839, was one of the most remarkable discourses ever heard in that or any other Methodist chapels; and his labours, through a long course of years, were attended with results of the most blessed character in almost every part of the land. His autobiography is itself a history of Methodism during his day, and many of his other works, biographical, theological, and controversial, bear evidence of his superior gifts, his untiring zeal, and his perfect devotedness to Methodism and its interests. He fell asleep on the 10th of March, 1873, being a few months over eighty-seven years of age.

The Rev. John Hannah, D.D., was for many years his intimate and bosom friend. He was born in the city of Lincoln, Nov. 3rd, 1792, and entered the ministry in 1814. His distinguished talents soon brought him into prominence, and his pulpit eloquence was surpassed by that of few. Twice he was deputed to visit America, twice he was elected to the chair of the Conference, and for twenty-five years he was a Theological Tutor, first at Hoxton, and afterwards at Didsbury, where he died in perfect peace on the morning of December 29th, 1867.

But a month later he was followed to the land of rest by his friend the Rev. John Scott, who was born in a village

near York, November 16th, 1792. He became eminent in connection with the question of national education, and as the Principal of the Normal Training Institution at Westminster. He was an able theologian, was twice President of the Conference, and left behind him a name respected and beloved by many, but especially by the pupils at Westminster, to whom he was a father and a friend.

The Rev. W. L. Thornton, M.A., was born in Huddersfield, January 27th, 1811, of godly parents, who trained him in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. He was converted in early life, and, on entering the Christian ministry, proved himself a workman that needed not to be ashamed. He possessed a highly cultivated mind, and his literary powers were of a superior order. He was for several years the Classical Tutor in one of the Colleges, was subsequently editor of the "Wesleyan Magazine," and in 1863 was appointed Representative to the General Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church in America, and President of the Canadian and Eastern British American Conferences. On his return home he was elected to the chair of the British Conference; but his health failed, and he died during his presidential year, March 5th, 1865. Almost his last words were, "Christ is very precious."

The Rev. Luke H. Wiseman, M.A., was born in the city of Norwich, January 19th, 1822, and it is said of him that he was a saint at twelve years of age, and a preacher at fourteen. He was favoured with a good education, and his mental powers were of a superior order. He was a thorough student of the Bible, a popular preacher, and a wise administrator of Circuit rules. In 1862 he became one of the secretaries of the Missionary Society, and in 1872 he was placed in the chair of the Conference. He was a pure and noble character, beloved by all who knew him, and most beloved by those who knew him best. In the prime of life, and somewhat suddenly, he was taken home on the 3rd of February, 1875.

Of more recent departure were three others, whose memories will long be fragrant in Methodism,—Drs. F. J. Jobson, W. Morley Punshon, and Gervase Smith, all of whom occupied the highest seat of honour in the Methodist Conference,

and all of whom did work for Christ and for His Church which posterity will talk about for many years.*

Among eminent local preachers of former days in England were Richard Burdsall, Robert Spence, Samuel Hick, the village blacksmith, and William, or *Billy* Dawson, as he was generally called, the Yorkshire farmer. The native eloquence of Mr. Dawson, both in the pulpit and on the platform, was often overwhelming, and in every part of the country he was one of the most popular of all preachers, both with the higher and the lower classes of society.

The laity of Methodism was also adorned by such men as Thomas Farmer, Esq., of Gunnersbury, and James Heald, Esq., of Stockport, both of whom, in turn, were Treasurers of the Wesleyan Missionary Society. And still more recently the princely liberality of Sir Francis Lycett, especially in aiding in the erection of chapels in the metropolis, is deserving of remembrance. All these, and many others, have entered on their reward, as also have many Christian women we might name,—the mothers of our Israel, who trained their sons and daughters for mission work abroad or at home.

Of living men and women we need not speak here, but the succession is kept up both in the ranks of the ministry and of the people, and there are not a few names in Methodism to-day that will be as much revered a few years hence as those we have spoken of are revered to-day.]

* It is fervently hoped that each of these men will have his biographer ere long. A memorial volume of Dr. E. Smith has already appeared, and a beautiful sketch of Dr. Punshon, relating chiefly to his work in Canada, has been published by his friend, the Rev. Hugh Johnson, M.A., in a work entitled "Toward the Sunrise." Dr. Punshon was appointed Representative to the Canadian Conference in 1867, and was elected its President. It was chiefly through his instrumentality that the splendid church in Toronto was erected.

CHAPTER XXVI.

*METHODISM IN CANADA, AND FOREIGN MISSIONS.**

METHODISM has existed in the territory now included in the Dominion of Canada in widely different forms. At one time it has been a mission, at another a fully organised church; in one part of the country it has taken on a Presbyterian form, in another the Episcopal form; dividing and crystallizing at last into both the prominent orders of Methodist Church government.

The British Provinces of North America, including Newfoundland, Prince Edward's Island, Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, Quebec, Ontario, and Manitoba, extend from the Atlantic to the Pacific—a distance of three thousand five hundred miles, and from the great lakes to the frozen ocean—a distance of about one thousand four hundred miles. This area comprises nearly one-third of the North American continent, and possesses a population of about four millions of souls.

Methodism was first established in this oldest and easternmost of the British colonies in 1765, and thence made its way westward and northward. For years this island was kept as a sort of royal preserve, for the sake of its game and its fisheries, and what few population settled there were chiefly "squatters," among whom poverty, ignorance, and irreligion prevailed.

In 1764, Lawrence Coughlan, one of Wesley's Irish itinerants, along with some others, was ordained by the Syrian Bishop Erasmus, from whom it is in some quarters asserted

* The thanks of the author are due to the Rev. Drs. Carrol, Rose, Dewart, and Withrow for materials used in this chapter.

that Wesley himself received episcopal consecration, in consequence of which, he was put away from the Methodist Connection. He the following year left England without any especial authority, and went over to preach among the little fishing hamlets on the shores of Newfoundland. So acceptable and useful was he, that his hearers petitioned the British Society for the Promotion of Christian Knowledge to have him regularly appointed as its missionary among them; to which, on the joint recommendation of Mr. Wesley and Lady Huntingdom, they consented, and promised him ordination by an English Bishop; which promise, however, was never fulfilled. His doctrines, preaching, and methods were essentially Wesleyan, and were attended with success in the salvation of souls; but fidelity to the truth here, as in England, awakened fierce opposition. He continued his labours for about seven years, suffering severe privations. He was prosecuted in the highest court of the island, but was acquitted; abusive letters were written to England against him; a physician was engaged to poison him, but, becoming converted, exposed the diabolical design. Meanwhile the success of the missionary increased, and he added many converts to his society; but the fury of his enemies became still more violent. They had him summoned before the Governor, a discerning and resolute officer, who not only acquitted him, but made him a justice of the peace, a proceeding which silenced his opposers, and the persecuted preacher pursued his labours with increased effect. His health at last failed, and in 1773 he was obliged to leave his parish and return to England. After his departure two or three local preachers supplied his lack of service until Mr. Wesley provided a successor in John M'Geary. Newfoundland was afterward visited and evangelized by that distinguished Methodist, William Black.

The first Methodists in the province of Nova Scotia emigrated from Yorkshire, England, in 1771. They settled, some in Cumberland, and some in Halifax, where they held the little meetings, to which they had been accustomed at home. In 1779 these little meetings resulted in the conversion of William Black, above mentioned; an English youth from Huddersfield, who at the age of nineteen commenced

his ministry in Nova Scotia, and out of the fruits of a great revival which attended his preaching organized several large Societies.

Black soon became one of the most successful heralds of the Gospel. From Nova Scotia he extended his labours into the adjacent province of New Brunswick, in which there were a few scattered villages along the shores of the Bay of Fundy; and in 1784, feeling the necessity of assistance in his wide circuit, he made a journey to Baltimore on the occasion of the famous Christmas Conference; passing through Boston on his route, where he stopped and preached several times with excellent effect. At the Christmas Conference, Freeborn Garrettson, a famous organizer and preacher, the first Presiding Elder of the New York District, and James O. Cromwell, were appointed to return with Black, and assist him on his distant field, which the next year was extended westward as far as to the river St. John, in New Brunswick. The names of William Black and John Mann are set down in the "American Minutes" of 1786 as appointed to Nova Scotia, and for some considerable time afterward these British Provinces were a part of the spiritual territory of the Methodist Episcopal Church of the United States. In 1789, Bishop Coke appointed him Superintendent of Nova Scotia and the other north-eastern provinces, which position he held during the remainder of his ministry. In 1791 he was ordained by Bishop Coke, at the Philadelphia Conference, and six additional preachers were given him for his great work. It appears that both Wesley and Coke contemplated a similar Church organization for the British Provinces to that which, after the Revolution, was established in the United States; but for reasons which are not perfectly clear this plan was never carried into effect.

For years after the first Conference in British America, in 1786, the titles and usages of the Methodist Episcopal Church prevailed in the Colonial Societies; but the war of the Revolution wrought an estrangement between these brethren, and after the superannuation of William Black, some time about 1792, the usages of British Methodism began to prevail, and after the year 1800 the eastern provinces were principally supplied with preachers from England,

this territory being organized under the name of the Conference of Eastern British America, in which relation it continued until 1874.

Methodism in Canada-West was of American origin. There were, it is said, some Methodist soldiers in the army of Gen. Wolfe, at Quebec, who held meetings in their camps and barracks as early as the year 1763, thus antedating by about three years the planting of Methodism by Embury in New York. In 1774, Embury, Paul Heck, and other Palatine emigrants, with their families, exchanged their home in New York for one in Upper Canada, or what is now the Province of Quebec; but after a residence of four years in the vicinity of Montreal they removed to Canada West—now Ontario—and settled in the township of Augusta, where they established a Methodist class. From time to time these classes in the various British provinces were reinforced by parties of Loyalists, or Tories, who, in spite of the Declaration of Independence, still maintained their allegiance to the British Crown. Quite a colony of these emigrants settled in the Bay of Quinte Country; and in 1787 George Neal, a local preacher from the Southern States, sought a home on the Canada side of the Niagara River, where he preached with great efficiency, and gathered another class.

At first the Methodist Societies in Upper Canada formed a part of the New York Conference, which, after the fashion of those early times, had a boundary on the south, but extended indefinitely northward just as far as the preacher chose to travel. In 1790, William Losee received an appointment as Conference Missionary "to range at large," and being of Tory proclivities, and having friends in Canada, he ranged off to the north-east, performing his journey on foot, with the occasional help of a canoe, and preached along the settlements of the Upper St. Lawrence River with such good effect that when he returned to his Conference, which sat in New York, in October, 1791, it was with a numerously signed petition asking for his regular appointment to that region; and for the years 1791-92 the name of Losee appears in the "Minutes" in connection with Kingston. He was a powerful man, especially in exhortation, and his

zeal and activity knew no bounds. During this year, on the Kingston Circuit he organized five classes and gathered one hundred and sixty-five members, which success led to his re-appointment, accompanied by the Rev. Darius Dunham, who travelled the western and Losee the eastern of the two circuits which comprised the whole of Upper Canada.

In 1791 the Methodist membership in Canada was reported at two thousand seven hundred and ninety-five, with thirteen preachers; and for about twenty years this territory was included either in the New York, the Philadelphia, the New England, or the Genesee Conference.

The Presiding Elder appointed to the Upper Canada District in 1805 was Henry Ryan, a Scotch-Irishman by descent, but born in Connecticut. He was a man of splendid powers both physical and spiritual, who had entered the itinerant ministry five years before, in the prime of his youth, being then about twenty-five years of age. He was prodigiously strong, and his quickness and courage were equal to his strength, for all of which endowments his itinerant life on the frontiers gave him ample use. His voice is described as flexible, musical, and of fabulous compass. His conversational tone would reach the outskirts of any ordinary congregation, though it was pleasant, and not over-loud; but when he "lifted up his voice," it was like the roar of a lion.

Elijah Hedding—afterward Bishop—with whom he was a junior preacher in 1802, describes him as "a very pious man, a man of great love for the cause of Christ, of great zeal in his work as a minister, a brave Irishman, and a man who laboured as if the judgment thunders were to follow each sermon. He was sometimes overbearing in the administration of discipline, but with that exception he performed his duties in every part of his work as a minister of Christ as faithfully as any man I ever knew."

The period of Ryan's presiding eldership on the Upper Canada District, like that of Black in Nova Scotia, was of quite unusual length, covering a period of about fourteen years, till the organization of the Canada Annual Conference in 1824. Ryan remained in Canada through the war of 1812, being a Briton by ancestry and by preference, though

by birth he was a citizen of the Republic, and during those troublous times he was the recognized head of Methodism in Upper Canada. He travelled the whole range of country from Montreal indefinitely northward, called out Canadian preachers to supply the work, and held at least three Annual Conferences on his own authority, at which he occupied the chair of the Bishop.

For some years after the war there was a strenuous movement in Canada to bring about a separation from the American Church, which, in 1824, led to the organization of the Canada Conference, and four years afterward to the Methodist Episcopal Church of Canada. To this movement Elder Ryan lent himself with characteristic vehemence; but its progress was too slow to suit his impetuous nature, and having no great love for the brethren across the border, he withdrew from their fellowship in 1827, only a year before the separation which he sought was accomplished. In 1829 he and a few like-minded agitators organized what was called the Canadian Wesleyan Church, whose chief differences from the parent body were lay delegation and the right of local preachers to a seat in Conference. This organization held together for ten years, when a minority returned to the old Church, and the others formed a union with the Methodist New Connection of England, and ultimately with the Methodist Church of Canada, in 1874.

The colleague of Henry Ryan on the Bay of Quinte Circuit in Canada, in 1805, was William Case, then a young man of twenty-five, a native of Massachusetts, a man of deep piety, and destined to a memorable career. He was ordained by Bishop Asbury, and the first six years of his ministry were spent under the direction of the New York Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church. Thereafter for a period of seventeen years—from 1810 to 1828—he held the post of Presiding Elder in Canada; he and Ryan being the two chief administrators of Upper Canadian Methodism. In the latter year Case was appointed Superintendent of Indian Missions and Schools, which schools and missions largely owed their existence to his labours in the time which he had saved from his work among the whites.

He had a fatherly way of talking about "my boys," and

the young preachers thus designated responded by calling him “Father Case.” Little children loved him, which is the same as saying that everybody loved him. Even the little Indians were glad to see him, and would literally “pluck his gown to share the good man’s smile;” nor did they fail of their object, for he treated them with the same kindness and affection as if they had been of a lighter hue. Before devoting himself to the Indian missions he was a popular preacher. He did not excel in exposition or in doctrine, but he had a way of his own in treating historical subjects and portraying domestic scenes, by which he would make his oratorical pictures seem almost real; and he possessed a pathetic style and a musical voice not unlike the softer tones of the Indians themselves, which gave his addresses a peculiar persuasiveness with them. He was also a sweet singer, and by means of his delightful songs he greatly promoted the progress of his ministry. By his singing he even found his way into the families of some intelligent Romanists, some members whereof were brought to a saving knowledge of Christ.

His career among the Indians seemed to be a providential one, and his pursuit of it was for years the great inspiration and passion of his life. The aboriginal tribes which hung on the outskirts of civilization in the British provinces, especially the Chippeway tribe, were a most degraded and besotted race—ignorant, indolent, improvident, filthy, drunken, and licentious to the last degree. No one hoped for their improvement, or even thought it to be possible; but Case, in his frequent journeys through the land, had often revolved their wretched condition in his mind; and when one Peter Jones, a half-breed Indian youth, was converted at a camp-meeting in 1823, Case broke out with the exclamation, “Bless God, the door is now open to the Indian tribes!”

With Peter Jones for an interpreter, Case opened his labours among the red men at Belleville, Rice Lake, Mud Lake, St. Clair, etc.; and soon a revival of religion swept throughout the length and breadth of the Indian settlements, in which hundreds of red men and women were brought to Christ. Thenceforth Case cut loose from the whites, and became a devotee to his Indian work.

A pleasant story is told of an interview between him and

Bishop George in the United States, whither Case had gone to beg money for his Indian Mission. At the close of his call the Bishop invited Case to offer prayer, and he at once began to pray for the "poor Indian" until he literally broke down with emotion. Recovering himself, he began to pray for the Indians again, and kept on in that strain, till the Bishop said, "I thought he had forgotten that white men had souls at all." Like Dr. Coke, his great missionary exemplar, Case solicited missionary money from house to house both in the United States and Canada. There were no missionary meetings in those days; the whole matter being left to fitful, spontaneous effort; and the financial part of his labours consumed a large proportion of his time.

Father Case and his missionaries rightfully earned the name of "labourers" in the Lord's vineyard; for one part of their task consisted in working with their hands to teach the Indians agriculture and the mechanic arts, as well as to raise food for themselves and families, and to build mission houses and chapels. They very soon acquired the Indian independence and civilization, and learned how to forage for themselves in their long journeys on foot or through the wilderness. A pack enclosed in a blanket slung on the back, and a gun with a small store of powder and shot, and a small Bible, constituted the Indian preacher's outfit; and thus entering into the lives of the people for whom they were labouring, they were all the more successful in bringing them to a knowledge of the truth.

Case's calm, quiet, and yet cheerful manner was adapted to the Indian mind. A blustering, driving man could not have succeeded with them; but he had a method of administering the most effectual rebukes in a way that would not offend. The most defective part of the converted Indian's character is his indolence and want of management. The Elder used to hold at Alderville what he called an "inquiry meeting," at which some Scripture character or piece of history was first discussed by the missionary, and then the natives were encouraged to ask questions concerning any point which they had not understood, or about which they wanted more information. This method was found entertaining and instructive. One evening the Patriarch Job was

the subject, and his history awakened a great deal of curiosity. He was put before them as an example of industry and economy, by which his great wealth was amassed. They wished to know again how many *sheep* he had, and were told "seven thousand."

"How many camels?"

"Three thousand."

"How many yoke of oxen?"

"Five hundred."

"How many she asses?"

"Five hundred."

"Now," said Case in conclusion, "suppose Job should pay you a visit, and walk around among you; and look at the way you farm, and look at your cows and oxen and pigs; what would you think he would say?"

"Don't know. What you think he say?"

"Well, I think he would shake his head, and say, 'This catching *musk-rat* is a small business!'"

The men all dropped their heads, and departed without saying a word: but they were not offended; for it passed into a proverb among them, which they applied to those who neglected agriculture for hunting—"Catching musk-rat small business."

Peter Jones, the Indian preacher, gives the following account of the introduction of Christianity among the Ojibways, at Rice Lake:—

"During the Methodist Conference at Hamilton, near Coburg, in September, 1827, several of the converted Indians from Grape Island, and others of us from River Credit, met at the Conference by direction of Father Case. The Indians pitched their wigwams in a grove. Here religious services were held. During this time, Chief Sawyer, Big Jacob, and others were sent to Rice Lake, to invite the Indians to come down to our encampment. Next morning they returned, accompanied by Captain Paudaush and Peter Rice-Lake, the two chiefs, and thirty or forty others. After refreshments we commenced religious 'talk;' we told them what great things the Great Spirit had done for us at the Credit and Grape Island, to which they all paid great attention, and seemed much impressed. During the same day Bishop

Hedding, Father Case, Dr. Bangs, and other ministers visited and addressed the Indians, and prayers and religious instruction were continued till toward evening, the Indians becoming more and more deeply impressed.

“At length the Spirit of the Lord was poured out in great power on the minds of the Indians, and many cried aloud, ‘What shall I do to be saved?’ That we might have more convenience for giving them instruction, an altar was formed by placing a pole against two trees. To this place the mourning penitents were invited to come and kneel for instruction and prayer, and instruction was given them as their several cases seemed to require. It was not long when Chiefs Rice-Lake and Paudaush arose and expressed their joyful feelings, saying they had found peace to their souls; and they gave glory to God for His mercy. Then another and another gave the same testimony, and ere the meeting closed, every adult Indian was made happy in the pardoning love of God. Oh, what a joyful time! The wilderness resounded with the voice of joy and gladness.

“On the return of the Rice Lake converts to their home, Captain Beaver and others from Grape Island were requested to accompany them, for the purpose of further instruction and edification in the Christian faith. The following occurrence will show the nature of the temptations the Indians had now to encounter, the device of the *white pagans* to ensnare them, and the firm resistance they showed against their two grand enemies, the *drunkard and rum*.

“One of these disciples of whiskey was ‘sure he could induce the Indians again to drink,’ and, providing himself with ardent spirits, he moved in his canoe over to the island where the Indians were encamped. Leaving all at the shore, he went up to the camp, and, inviting the Indians down, brought forth his bottle. ‘Come,’ said he; ‘we always good friends; we once more take a good drink in friendship.’

“‘No,’ said Captain Paudaush, ‘we drink no more of the fire-waters.’

“‘Oh, but you will drink with me; we always good friends.’ But while this son of Belial was urging them to drink, the Indians struck up in the tune of *Walsal* the new hymn they had lately learned to sing:—

“O uh pa-gish ke che ingo’ dwok,
Neej uh ne she nah baig:”

“O for a thousand tongues, to sing
My great Redeemer’s praise!”

and while they were singing, this bacchanalian, defeated in his wicked device, and looking like a *fool*, paddled away from the island, leaving the Indians to their temperance and their religious devotions.”

On another occasion Jones mentions a five days’ meeting held among the Indians of Lake Simcoe, at the conclusion of which the Rev. Egerton Ryerson baptized 122 adult Indians on the profession of their faith.

In summing up the results of his thirty years’ missionary work, Father Case exclaims, “Since our remembrance, tribes and nations have been converted, increasing the ranks of the Church by thousands, and strengthening her for further warfare and certain conquest. During the thirty years of our missionary labours among the wild men of our forests, fourteen bands of wandering pagans have been converted; people degraded in ignorance, and besotted by strong drink, without either house or domestic animals. These have been instructed in the Christian religion, gathered into villages, provided with dwellings of comfort, and taught the duties of domestic life. Two noble institutions have been erected, and are now in operation, the one at Alwick, near Coburg, the other at Mount Elgin, near London, on the River Thames, in which the Indian youth are taught the common branches of English education, as well as agriculture on the farms attached to the schools. At each of these establishments provision is made for the board and clothing of fifty young Indians. Our Church has now” (in 1855, the date of this discourse) “in the mission field twenty-one missionaries to the Indians, seventy-nine ministers to the domestic missions, sixteen day-school teachers, fifteen day-schools, two of which are large industrial institutions, and 10,624 members; 1,142 of that number are Indians.” The death of William Case occurred on the 19th of October, 1855.

In 1812, before the breaking out of the war between England and the United States, the number of Methodist members in Canada was 2,250. At the close of the war,

three years afterward, there was found to have been a decrease of 785 in Canada, and also a decrease in the Church of the United States of more than 10,000. With the return of peace the Societies again began to prosper, and in June, 1816, at the session of the Genesee Annual Conference, which was held at Elizabethtown, a great revival commenced under a sermon by Bishop George, and before the close of the session it is believed that over a hundred souls were awakened. This revival spread in waves of power and blessing, until the shores of Lake Ontario, the Niagara, and the St. Lawrence became vocal with prayer and praise. There were not ministers enough to conduct all the services, but hundreds of people would assemble for prayer-meetings, sometimes on one side of the lake or rivers, and sometimes on the other, the people crossing in boat-loads, to be the helpers of each other's joy, and making the woods and waters echo with the music of their hymns as they rowed from shore to shore. In this revival a new impetus was given to the work in Canada, which has continued to prosper since that day.

During the war, while hostilities were raging on the lakes and frontiers, it was no easy matter for the New York, the New England, or the Genesee Conferences to find among their numbers men suited to the Canadian circuits, since politics were sure to creep more or less into the spirit, if not into the forms, of prayers and sermons. Thus it was that in 1814 the Society at Quebec sent to England for a minister, and in response to their call the Rev. John Strong arrived in Quebec in June of that same year. The Montreal Society was divided, but the majority went over to British Wesleyanism, which sent out the Rev. Richard Williams to the Montreal Circuit, and the Rev. Mr. Burch, the American preacher, who had stayed at his post during the war, took his departure just as the Wesleyan "missionaries" arrived.

Williams and Strong commenced operations on the St. Francis River and in other parts of Lower Canada, in the fields hitherto occupied by the American preachers, and they insisted upon holding the chapel in Montreal, in view of the fact that the money which built it had been mostly collected in England. They also extended their operations up into Western or Upper Canada, where the American party

prevailed, and located at Cornwall, Kingston, York, Niagara, and about the Bay of Quinte. This was the occasion of no little controversy; and in order to adjust the difficulties which were continually arising, and to make an end of strife, an agreement was entered into between the British and American Conferences in 1820, to the effect that the English missionaries should withdraw from Upper Canada, and the American preachers from Lower Canada; thus, like Lot and Abraham, dividing the country between them.

But this compact was destined to a short life. There were many Methodists in Upper Canada who did not desire to remain under the American jurisdiction, and to meet their views the expedient of a Canadian Annual Conference was tried; but after four years this was found to be too close a bond with their republican neighbours, and in 1828 the Methodist Episcopal Church of Canada was organized. This new Church could hardly be called a secession, since Canadian Methodism had never held other than a voluntary connection with the Methodism of the States, and all the preachers who had been sent across the line had been sent as volunteers. There was, therefore, no obstacle in the way of the organization of this new Church, and no theological root of bitterness underneath, which might afterward spring up to trouble them. The Conference at which this peaceful separation was arranged was presided over by Bishop Hedding, who, when the resolutions of division had been passed, proposed to vacate the chair, as he was no longer in fact their chairman, by virtue of his office as Bishop of the Methodist Episcopal Church in the United States; but so fraternal was the spirit of the assembly, that he was urged to continue in the chair during the remainder of the session; and, in place of a Bishop, William Case was elected as "General Superintendent *pro tem.*" Thus amicably was severed the connection between the two bodies, and the Methodist Episcopal Church of Canada started out alone, the Wesleyans becoming more and more British in form and manner, till, for a considerable time, they were joined in organic union with the British Wesleyan Conference, though, as will presently appear, Canada at length came to have a grand united Methodism of its own.

The labours of Coughlan in Newfoundland, and of William

Black—"Bishop Black," as he was sometimes called—in Nova Scotia and New Brunswick, have already been mentioned. Previous to the year 1800 a majority of the Methodist circuits in the Lower Provinces were supplied from the New York and New England Conferences, but after that date most of the preachers were sent out by the British Wesleyan Missionary Society. After the division of Canadian Methodism into the two sections, the Eastern and Western, an agreement was entered into between those bodies and the Methodist Episcopal Church, that neither should send its preachers across the line which separated the two nations without the consent of the other; a compact which was essential to the peace and quietness of the Canadian Societies, but which built up a wall of separation between the two portions of American Methodism that had been blessed with a common history.

[In the year 1832-3 the Rev. Egerton Ryerson was sent as the delegate of the Upper Canadian Conference to the British Conference, with proposals for a more intimate union of the two, which was subsequently effected through the efforts of the delegates from the British Conference, and for two years the Rev. William Lord, who had been sent from England to Canada, presided over the Conference in that country. But owing to political causes the union was dissolved in 1840, but re-formed in 1847. In the year 1853 the Mission in Eastern Canada, hitherto under the direction of the Wesleyan Missionary Society in London, was transferred to the Canadian Conference; and in the year 1874 the Wesleyans in Canada, including the New Connection, were formed into one body, under a Conference affiliated with that of Great Britain.]

Essential changes had been going on in the country. Instead of separate provinces, they had become a Confederation, with less of British authority over them; and this political union naturally suggested a union of different sections of Canada Methodists and a larger independence of British control. The discipline of this body, so far as it relates to the internal affairs of the Societies, remains unchanged. The six Annual Conferences into which the whole work has been divided, namely, the Toronto, London, Montreal,

Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, and Prince Edward's Island and Newfoundland Conferences are composed exclusively of ministers. There is also a quadrennial General Conference after the manner of the Methodist Episcopal Church, composed of an equal number of ministers and laymen, and its president, whose term of office covers the entire four years from one Conference to another, is the highest officer in the Connection. The manner of stationing and ordaining preachers is copied from the British Wesleyan Conference, but there is, as might be expected, a much larger degree of elasticity and freedom in the general management of affairs.

[Of this General Conference, the Rev. Egerton Ryerson, D.D., was chosen the first President. He had for several years been the chief Superintendent of Education in Canada, and his eminent talents and piety marked him out as a fitting leader of the Methodism of Canada until 1878, when infirm health compelled him to retire. Dr. Ryerson was a great and good man, and died Feb. 19th, 1882, being then in the eightieth year of his age. His funeral was one of the largest ever witnessed in the city of Toronto. An admirable Memoir of him appeared in the Wesleyan Magazine for May, 1882, from the pen of the Rev. E. Barrass, M.A.]

At the time the above-mentioned union was effected, the membership of the united body was 102,178, with 733 ministers, since which time its progress has been rapid, the statistics of 1881 showing a membership of 122,512, with 1,185 itinerant ministers. The annual income of the Canadian Missionary Society is over \$140,000 (£28,000), being an average of considerably more than a dollar (4s. 2d.) per member; a showing which is greatly to the credit of the Canadians, who in this respect far outshine their neighbours in the States.

The Missionary Society of this Missionary Church has already planted 409 stations, dotting the whole country from the Atlantic to the Pacific, and stretching far up into the great Hudson Bay Territory toward the frozen north. There are at present about 40,000 missionary Church members under the care of 430 missionary pastors, a considerable proportion of which work is among the Indians and half-breeds; that class of people with whom the

Republic has had so much trouble, but who, having from the first been regarded by the Canadians as human beings, with souls to be saved, have steadily improved in the arts of civilization, as well as in peace and piety. This Society has also extended its missions to the West Indies and Japan, though the enormous extent of its home territory would seem to give sufficient exercise for its evangelizing work.

The total value of the Church property of this body, as reported at the General Conference of 1878, was £480,556; the value of property in the educational institutions and endowments was £78,000.

CHAPTER XXVII.

THE FOREIGN MISSIONS OF BRITISH METHODISM.

TO render somewhat more complete this view of *World-wide Methodism*, it is necessary to glance a little more fully at the Foreign Missions which stand connected with the British Conference. They exist on every continent of the globe, they embrace very many islands of the sea, they have come in contact with popery, with infidelity, and with paganism in its protean forms. They have attacked Buddhism and Brahmanism in India and Ceylon, Confucianism in China; Fetishism in Africa, and Cannibalism in the islands of the South. They have won souls for Christ from among polished Hindoos, warlike Kafirs, and bloodthirsty Fijians; they have almost girded the globe with their chapels and school-rooms, and their agents are preaching the gospel to-day in numerous languages and dialects of the babbling earth.

Reference is made in a preceding chapter to Dr. Coke and the West Indies. The work which he began, and in which others took part after his decease, has gone on in those beautiful islands to this day, and its history forms a chapter of trial, suffering, and persecution, endured both by ministers and people rarely equalled, and seldom if ever surpassed. For many years slavery was rampant in all its horrors, and whilst many a Christian slave was sold, and not a few flogged even unto death, their missionaries were imprisoned and otherwise maltreated, until the story of their wrongs reached the British House of Commons, and slavery in all our colonies was condemned, and ultimately ceased to be. It was a grand day for England when that foul blot was wiped from her statute book for ever, and it was a

grand day for the slaves when, on August 1st, 1838, they were declared free, and could be bought and sold no more. And what are there in those islands now? There are seven Districts which embrace upwards of eighty Circuits situate in all, or nearly all, the islands of the entire group, having 47,000 church members, the large majority of whom are negroes, whose ancestors of the last generation were slaves. Many of these Circuits now support their own ministers, who, with the native and assistant ministers, are upwards of 100 in number, whilst thousands of children are taught in the day and Sunday schools, and as a moderate estimate 160,000 persons are attendants on the public ministry of the word of God. It is highly probable that in a few years the West Indies will have their Methodist Conference. One of the Secretaries of the Missionary Society, the Rev. M. C. Osborn, visited them a few years ago, to ascertain whether it was practicable to form a Conference in that part of the world, and the question is occupying the attention of the General Committee, and will ere long be brought to a practical issue.

A brief mention is made in a former chapter of Dr. Coke's departure for India, and of his lamented death at sea. The names of his companions are worthy of remembrance—Messrs. Harvard, Squance, Clough, Erskine, Lynch, and Ault; all of whom finished their course with joy, after years of useful service in mission work or in work at home. It was a privilege to hear the story of their difficulties and their conquests, from the lips of several of them, as we have done; and certainly they were missionaries of the right stamp, raised up and qualified by God Himself. They laid the foundation of the Wesleyan Missions in India; and others joined them of the same heroic spirit as themselves, so that the work has gone on to this *day*, and no one can estimate its grand results. Some of the most devoted men and women who ever entered the mission field have laboured in that country, and the present staff is large, earnest, and, to a considerable extent, successful in spreading the light of Christian truth.

In the island of Ceylon there are two Districts, North and South, the population of the former being chiefly Brah-

mins, who speak the Tamil language, and that of the latter Buddhists, who speak the Singhalese. In N. Ceylon there are 27 ministers and assistants, 900 Church members, and upwards of 8,000 children and young people in the day and Sabbath schools. In the Jaffna girls' boarding school there are now 103 pupils, 82 of whom are boarders. These girls are chiefly the daughters of heathen parents, who allow them to come under Christian training, knowing that thus they will be led to abandon idol worship. In South Ceylon there are 100 ministers, 2,170 Church members, and upwards of 7,000 scholars. In the Tamil language the Word of God and other books have been printed and widely circulated; and the entire Wesleyan Hymn Book, including the latest supplement, has been translated and printed, and is now in general use. The translators of the hymns were the Revs. Elijah Hoole, John Kilner, Peter Percival, Edmund Rigg, and several native ministers; and the volume, which is exceedingly neat and beautiful, was printed under the direction of the Rev. John Brown, at the Mission Press in Batticaloa. In the Singhalese language also a religious literature has been provided for the people; and the writings of the late Rev. D. J. Gogerly, against Brahminism, have produced such an effect on the public mind, that many of the priests themselves are ashamed of the system, and scarcely venture to stand forth as its advocates.

On the great continent of India, Methodism numbers four Districts—the Madras, Mysore, Calcutta, and Lucknow and Benares Districts, in which there are twenty-two circuits occupied by forty-seven missionaries and numerous native catechists. The number of church members is small, being not more than 1,400, but the work of Christian education is carried on in all these Districts, and thousands of children and young people are hearing the glad news of redemption through a crucified and risen Saviour. An extensive Christian literature is in circulation, and thus this great stronghold of heathenism is being assailed, and the vast country over which Queen Victoria now reigns as empress will one day bow beneath the sceptre of the King of kings. Tamil, Bengalee, and Hindustani are spoken by the missionaries in those Districts where these languages are vernacular; and

in Calcutta and Benares ladies are carrying on zenana work; that is, work among the females to whom none but females can have access. A high-caste Brahmin lady in Calcutta has granted the free use of a room for the zenana schools, in return for the instruction given to her daughter, and two Maharratta and Gujuratha families have requested the missionaries to instruct the ladies of their households. The great barrier to progress in India is caste; but before the spread of knowledge and the power of Christian truth it is gradually giving way, and the agents of all missionary societies rejoice in the prospect of the victory which will come. Mahommedanism alone is as yet untouched in India, as elsewhere, but it also must fall, and Christ must reign over all the land.

The year 1813, in which Dr. Coke urged the Conference to send him to the East, was memorable for another reason—it was the year in which, on October 6th, the Wesleyan Missionary Society was formed by a public meeting held in Leeds, at which Thomas Thompson, Esq., M.P., presided, and no less than thirty-six speakers addressed the audience. What hath God wrought since that period! None of the leaders of that great movement live to-day, but their work lives, and their mantle has descended on their sons and daughters, and the tide of blessing and salvation has continued to flow on. Before that event, a mission had been commenced at Sierra Leone, on the western coast of Africa, and, deadly as this climate is to European constitutions, the missions on that coast have been sustained to this day, though at the sacrifice of many precious lives. In 1835 a mission was established at Cape Coast, which gradually extended along to Domonasi, and thence to Yoruba and the Dahomey Country. Forty-two missionaries and assistant missionaries are now labouring in Western Africa, and the churches possess a membership of thirteen thousand, nearly all of whom are Africans, whose skins are of the deepest dye.

Passing round to the southern coast of the great African continent, we find Methodism established first in the Cape of Good Hope District, which embraces a vast tract of country extending beyond the colony westward into the Namaqua territory, and northward, within the colony, to the borders

of the Orange River. In the year 1816, Barnabas Shaw entered this country, began his work at Cape Town, and thence proceeded to visit the native tribes beyond, whom he found as wild and as barbarous as human beings could be. He was a noble man, and his wife was a noble woman, and as the pioneers of missionary labour they did a good work, and left behind them an imperishable name. They were followed by Thomas Laidman Hodgson and Samuel Broadbent, who went into the interior, and began a work among the Griquas, Corannas, and other wild tribes, and to-day the standard of the cross waves over thousands in those parts of Africa who previously had never heard the name of Jesus. In the Cape District there are now 15 missionaries, 1,700 Church members, and 2,180 scholars in the day and Sunday schools. In the city of Cape Town a beautiful new English church has recently been erected, whilst there are other places of worship for the Dutch-speaking population, which includes many coloured people of different tribes.

Eastward of the Cape there are now six Districts, extending from Port Elizabeth—Algoa Bay, to Port Natal and the borders of Zululand, and thence to the north and east to the Transvaal and the diamond diggings, in which vast territory the Gospel is proclaimed in English, Dutch, Kafir, and Sechuana, to tens of thousands of immortal souls. In the year 1821 the Rev. William Shaw went to that country as the pastor of a number of emigrants, who were sent out by the British Government to colonise a portion of it, called Albany. The seed of the kingdom found good soil; other missionaries were sent, or raised up among the colonists, and Mr. Shaw went into Kafirland, where he commenced a station which he called Wesleyville, and which was the first of a line of mission villages which now extend to Natal and beyond it, and will one day be carried northward to the lakes Tanganika and the Victoria Nyanza, where already other missionaries of different sections of the Church are zealously at work.*

* Mr. Shaw finished his work in South Africa, and returned to England in the year 1856. He was elected President of the British Conference in 1865, and died in great peace on Dec. 3rd, 1872. His life was written by his long-trying friend, the Rev. W. B. Boyce.

The Kafir tribes are physically a fine race of people, but were sunk in the very depths of barbarism and cruelty. They had a faint notion of the Creator, yet they had no temples and no gods; their language was unwritten, and to books they were perfect strangers. The Rev. W. B. Boyce followed Mr. Shaw in a few years, went into Kafirland, studied the language, and found out the secret of its construction. He prepared the first Kafir Grammar, and, together with other missionaries, laid the platform of a Kafir literature which now embraces the whole of the Sacred Scriptures and many hymns, and books both for children and adults. A second Grammar was published in 1854, by the Rev. J. W. Appleyard, which Max Müller and other eminent philologists have spoken of in the highest terms; and Mr. Appleyard also carried through the press, under the auspices of the British and Foreign Bible Society, an entire edition of the Scriptures in that language. In these Districts there are now upwards of eighty missionaries, of whom many are converted Kafirs, and the number of members connected with the English and native churches is upwards of 16,800.

In the year 1880, the Rev. John Kilner, the senior secretary of the Missionary Society, was requested by the Committee to visit the Missionary Districts of South Africa, with a view to ascertain what more could be done to strengthen and extend them, and whether the time had arrived for the formation of a South African Conference. He was satisfied that it had arrived, and on his return home he presented such a report as to lead the Committee to recommend the adoption of that motion to the British Conference. It was unanimously approved of by the Conference of 1882, and the Rev. John Walton, who had resided in South Africa for several years, was appointed the first President, and has returned to his new home, invested with the authority which belongs to such an office. There is considerable wealth among the Methodists of South Africa. They already raise some £30,000 per annum for the support of the ministry, and there is every hope that in a few years they will be wholly independent of any help from England, and will sustain the whole of the missions in Kafirland and the Bechuana country.

And this leads us to speak of another part of the work, and of the affiliated Conferences of the southern hemisphere. There Methodism has, under God, been made a blessing to tens of thousands of colonists and of the coloured races of the islands of the sea. For many years Australia, or New South Wales, was a penal settlement, and the condition of hundreds of the convicts was exceedingly deplorable. In the year 1815, Mr. Samuel Leigh went to that country, recommended to the Government by Dr. Adam Clarke as a schoolmaster, but ordained to the work of the Christian ministry. He reached Sydney, and soon entered on a work as romantic and as successful as that of many of the American pioneers spoken of in this volume. Souls were converted, Societies formed, rude and humble chapels erected—in Sydney a very substantial one—and thus Methodism was established in the colony, notwithstanding difficulties innumerable. Mr. Leigh's health broke down, and he was recommended to go to New Zealand for a change, after which he visited England, when he married, and then went to New Zealand again, when he laid the foundation of another great work among barbarous and cruel tribes whose chief delight was blood. He was succeeded in Sydney by the Rev. Walter Lawry, a man of equal zeal, earnestness, and power; and the tide of blessing rose from year to year both in Australia and New Zealand. To Methodism, those countries owe a large amount of their religious and commercial prosperity. Other labourers, belonging to the Church of England and the London Missionary Societies, entered the field, but Methodism took its stand as a leading ecclesiastical power, and has kept it hitherto, and will still advance.

In the year 1825, the Rev. John Thomas landed in Tonga, Friendly Isles, where cannibalism raged with fearful power, and the people butchered, cooked, and ate their fellow-men with even more delight than they ate any other food. *There is no cannibalism in those islands now.* Christianity has swept it utterly away; and King George, who became an early convert to the truth, formed a code of laws for the government of his subjects, based on the principles of God's Holy Word. The Fiji Islands were visited by converted Tonguese, and in 1827 William Cross planted the standard

of the cross in Fiji, and was followed by John Hunt, James Calvert, Richard Lyth, and several others, and again cannibalism was conquered by the Word of God, and the Fiji Islands, now possessions of the British crown, are nearly all Christian, thousands of the natives having become partakers of the renovating and sanctifying power of God.

Mr. Thurston, the Colonial Secretary, issued some time ago a Fiji Blue Book, in which he states that out of the entire population of the colony, which amounts to 124,902 persons, 103,000 are Wesleyan Methodists.

In the year 1855 the Australian Conference was constituted, and held its first session in Sydney, under the presidency of the Rev. W. B. Boyce. It started with 116 ministers, nearly 800 chapels and preaching places, and 19,897 Church members, the result of only thirty-seven years' labours. Gold had already been discovered in the country, and thousands had flocked to the diggings, to the great jeopardy of their moral and religious welfare. But whilst wealth increased, the heralds of salvation multiplied, and Christian ministers followed the people, and faithfully warned them of the dangers attendant upon getting rich. Mr. Boyce, after occupying the post of one of the general secretaries of the Missionary Society at home, still lives, and has taken up his abode in Sydney, where, in his declining years, he contemplates the wonderful changes he has witnessed, and doubtless rejoices in the work that has been wrought.

And what is the position of Methodism to-day in the southern hemisphere? It has its General Conference, held once in three years, which embraces four Conferences, whose sessions are held annually—namely, THE NEW SOUTH WALES AND QUEENSLAND CONFERENCE, THE VICTORIA AND TASMANIA CONFERENCE, THE SOUTH AUSTRALIA CONFERENCE, AND THE NEW ZEALAND CONFERENCE. From the Report of these General Conferences, held in Adelaide in May, 1881, we learn that in connection with them, including the South Sea Missions, there are 2,197 churches, 369 ministers, six colleges, 4,480 local preachers, 60,938 Church members, 140,000 Sabbath scholars, and 375,500 regular attendants on public worship. The number of native ministers—converted Tonguese, New

Zealanders, and Fijians—exceeds 120, and, whilst already most of the churches support their own ministers, they also contribute largely to all the funds of Methodism, and will ere long sustain all the missions in the South Sea Islands, without any aid from British Methodism. It is, we think, a misfortune that no account of these missions now appears in the Annual Report of the Wesleyan Missionary Society; and as the minutes of Australian Conferences are seen by very few in this country, we hear little of their progress, which, however, is such as to cheer the hearts of all true Christians. What a romantic and glorious history is that of the missions in Fiji! We will venture to say that it is exceeded by no evangelistic work of modern times; and what stronger evidence of the truth of Christianity can men desire than that of thousands of once bloodthirsty cannibals sitting, clothed, and in their right minds, at the feet of Jesus, the Saviour of the world?

The Australian churches sustained a great loss in April, 1881, by the wreck of the steamship *Tasmania* on the coast of New Zealand, there being on board five members of the General Conference, including the Rev. Joseph Waterhouse, whose father was so eminent a missionary in that part of the world. All these brethren went down with the vessel, leaving their families and friends in great sorrow; but the mysterious dispensation was doubtless overruled, and deep sympathy was felt for the bereaved by other churches, as well as their own.

We cross over again to the great continent of Asia, where, in the celestial Europe, so called, another mission has been formed. In the year 1855, George Piercy, feeling that he was called of God to go to China, offered himself to the Society, and a special fund was raised for the purpose of sending him and Josiah Cox to that country. It was a momentous and difficult enterprise, but it has gradually advanced, and there are now two districts in China, Canton and Wuchang, embracing seven circuits, in which are 379 members of the Church, under the care of sixteen missionaries, several of whom are converted Chinese. Schools are in active operation, and multitudes of the heathens are hearing of a greater teacher than Sikaya Mouni, or than Confucius,

even of the world's Redeemer, the eternal Son of God. A medical missionary resides at Fatshan; and at Hankow and other places medicines are frequently dispensed to the afflicted, but with a view to their spiritual good in particular, inasmuch as opportunities are thus afforded of preaching to them the great Physician of the soul. The females of China, whose condition is as sad as is that of the females of India, are visited by Bible-women wherever practicable; and not a few have been led to the feet of Christ, and have found in Him the peace which they have sought in vain elsewhere.

Another affiliated Conference is that of France, which was first formed at Nismes in the year 1852. In France and Switzerland there are sixteen stations, twenty-nine missionaries and assistant missionaries, and 1,780 Church members, whilst it is estimated that 10,700 persons are more or less regular attendants on the ministry of the word. The progress of the work is slow, but a clear and powerful testimony is borne against the delusions of popery on the one hand, and against the blighting influence of scepticism on the other.

Italy has not yet its Conference, but Methodism has found an open door in Rome, Florence, Milan, Naples, and other Italian towns, and also in Palermo and other towns of Sicily. No sooner was the temporal power of the Pope destroyed, than Rome was occupied by a Wesleyan minister, the Rev. H. J. Piggott, and ere long many Italians were converted, and upwards of twenty of them are now employed as ministers or assistants in the great work of evangelising these lovely portions of the world. There are two Methodist missionaries in Gibraltar, Barcelona, and the Balearic Isles; but from Madrid, the capital of Spain, the Rev. W. H. Rule was driven by the priests several years ago, and the way is not yet open for the re-commencement of the work. The statistics of these missions show that there are in France 136 Church members, in Italy 1,377, and in Spain and Malta 374.

If our limits would permit, we could give illustrations of the power of God in the conversion of men of all the nations and tribes mentioned in the above sketch, of the most striking nature. So mightily has the Word, through the instrumentality of Methodism, prevailed. But Methodism does not boast. She attributes her victories, not to her agents,

but to the truths which they proclaim,—to the story of the cross which she tells everywhere in all its simplicity and power. She celebrated the jubilee of her missions in the year 1863, when public meetings were held throughout Great Britain and Ireland, and a fund was raised for the extension of the work, amounting to £188,925, by means of which the Richmond College was purchased for missionary purposes, and large grants were made to many of the districts in different parts of the world. It was a glorious season, as we well remember, and one feature connected with the public meetings was that of missionary love-feasts, in which only returned missionaries spoke, and told of their wonderful experiences in the fields they had occupied in different parts of the world.

Of the heroic men and women who formed the vanguard of these missions, and have passed away, we have mentioned but a few. There are others, many others, too numerous to name, and of whom the present generation of Methodists knows little or nothing. But their names were in the book of life, and their spirits are now in the paradise of God. The line is unbroken, the succession does not fail. May it ever be so, until the gospel of the kingdom shall have been preached as a witness to all nations, and a yet brighter dispensation, even the millennial reign of Christ, shall dawn upon the earth!

CHAPTER XVIII

RECENT METHODISM AND THE ŒCUMENICAL CONFERENCE.

[TWO events in the history of British Methodism must be referred to, ere we pass to the one with a sketch of which this volume is to close.

The first is the formation of the mixed Conference of ministers and laymen, for the transaction of the financial affairs of the Connection. For many years mixed committees of the several funds had met annually before the Conference assembled, when reports of their proceedings during the year were presented, and suggestions offered for their future guidance. But those committees had not legislative powers, and did not form part of the Conference itself. Long, therefore, was it felt that some other mode of action was desirable; but it was supposed by many that legal difficulties stood in the way, and that Mr. Wesley's Poll Deed prevented laymen from being associated with the Conference. The opinion of counsel was taken on the subject, and that opinion was not unfavourable to the project of forming a mixed Conference which should meet after the Ministerial Conference, and transact only such business as related to the financial and secular affairs of the Church. Long and warm debates took place, until, at the Conference held in Nottingham, in the year 1876, the principle of the measure was agreed to by a large majority, and the committee, which had already sat on the question, was authorized to draw up a scheme to be presented at the Conference of 1877. At that Conference, which met in Bristol, the plan was finally adopted, and the first mixed Conference was held in Bradford in the year 1878. The Ministerial Conference met first, and chose as its

president, by an almost unanimous vote, the Rev. J. H. Rigg, D.D., who had made lay delegation his study for some years. He was, and still is, the principal of the Wesleyan Training College, Westminster, and was thoroughly acquainted with Methodism both in this country and in America, having been the representative of the British Conference to the United States in 1875. His election therefore was highly popular, and he proved himself, under these new circumstances, an able administrator and guide. All business connected with ministerial status and character, etc., was transacted by the Ministerial Conference, after which the mixed Conference assembled, which included an equal number of ministers and laymen—two hundred and forty of each; and by that Conference the financial affairs of the Connection were settled for the year, together with all such business as the laity could properly transact.* The utmost harmony prevailed during all the sittings, and nearly every one felt that the right course had been taken, and that Methodism in Great Britain was about to take another and a higher position than before. When this great measure is viewed in a spiritual, social, or ecclesiastical point of view, it commends itself to the Christian mind; and it was adopted without any agitation, and has been accepted by the people with the highest satisfaction and joy. The only thing necessary to give legal authority to the acts of the mixed Conference is their subsequent approval by the legal hundred, and as the legal hundred form part of that Conference, any differences of opinion are not very likely to arise.

At this Conference of 1878, arrangements were made for the raising of a fund for the relief and extension of the work of God, which was named *The Thanksgiving Fund*. The first public meeting on behalf of this fund was held in City Road Chapel, London, when such a burst of Christian liberality took place as Methodism had scarcely ever before known. This was followed by meetings in the several districts, and subsequently in most of the circuits, during that and the following year, and the sums promised up to the present date, 1882, amount to upwards of £303,000. Thus

* See Minutes of the Conference for 1878, pp. 352-86.

the Methodist people again manifested their deep love for the Church of which they are members, and the God of their fathers crowned this enterprise with large success. "To their power," and even "beyond their power," many of the ministers, and of the laity as well, gave to that fund out of grateful hearts; and whilst the wealthy laid their thousands on the altar, the middle classes and the poor laid down what they could. But the praise was all the Lord's, and to Him it was presented in many a lofty and noble strain of song.

By means of this noble offering, several debts on the funds of the Connection have been discharged. A new branch of the Theological Institution has been established in Birmingham; large sums have been given towards the relief and extension of Home and Foreign Missions; and an Orphanage, bearing the name of "The Princess Alice," has been commenced, a scheme proposed by Mr. S. Jevons, of Birmingham, who gave to it his generous help.

Thus Methodism in Great Britain takes a new start in the great work of the world's evangelization, and the tithes having been brought into the storehouse, God will pour upon His churches showers of blessing. Already there are signs of abundance of rain. The addition of more than 12,000 members to our churches in Great Britain during the year 1881-2, is an indication of the presence and power of the Holy Spirit in our midst, for which we are thankful, and take courage.

And now we may pass on to the great event of the year 1881.]

On the seventh day of September the first General Conference of a world-wide Methodism commenced, when delegates from the twenty-seven bodies of Christians who trace their history from the great Wesleyan revival, and who still hold a common faith in those Gospel truths, the preaching whereof led to that great awakening, met at the City Road Chapel in London—the Cathedral Church of Methodism—for the purpose of promoting the fellowship and Christian unity of this large family of true believers, and of

* It is a somewhat remarkable fact that this venerable sanctuary was greatly injured by a fire which occurred a few months before, and only just in time for the holding of the Conference was it restored to its more than former beauty.—T. S.

promoting the further advancement of the kingdom of Christ by the agencies which have been so successfully in use among them.* The following list of the bodies represented, together with the number of delegates from each, will give an idea of their relative size and of their geographical position :—

	Clerical Delegates.	Lay Delegates.
1. Wesleyan Methodist—England and Scotland	44	42
2. Irish Methodist Church	5	5
3. Methodist New Connection—Great Britain	6	6
4. Primitive Methodist Churches—Great Britain	18	18
5. Bible Christian Churches—Great Britain	6	4
6. United Methodist Free Churches—Great Britain	11	11
7. Wesleyan Reform Union—Great Britain	2	2
8. United Free Gospel Churches—England	—	2
9. French Methodists	2	—
10. Australasian Methodist Churches	7	9
11. Methodist Episcopal Church—United States	55	25
12. Methodist Episcopal Church, South—the Southern States of America	20	18
13. Methodist Protestant Church—Central and North-Western States of America	2	4
14. Evangelical Association, German-American—Central States of America	2	—
15. United Brethren—Ohio, U.S.	2	—
16. American Wesleyan Church—Northern States of America	1	1
17. Free Methodist Church—Central and Western States of America	2	—
18. Primitive Methodist Church, Northern States of America	1	1
19. Independent Methodist Church, Maryland, U.S. ...	1	1
20. Congregational Methodist Church, Southern States of America	2	—
21. African Methodist Episcopal Church—Southern and Western States of America	8	4
22. African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church—Central and Southern States of America	9	1
23. Coloured Methodist Episcopal Church of America—Southern States	3	3
24. Methodist Church of Canada	8	4
25. Methodist Episcopal Church of Canada	3	1
26. Primitive Methodist Church of Canada	1	1
27. Canadian Bible Christians	1	1
Total	222	164
Total delegates (appointed), 386.		

* * The names of all the delegates are given in the General Report of the Conference, published at the Wesleyan Conference Office, City Road, London. This volume also contains the addresses of the several speakers, and very full accounts of the entire proceedings of the Conference.

The following statistical table was presented to the Œcumenical Conference on the second day of its session :—

I. BRITISH WESLEYAN METHODISM.

	Branches.	Local Preachers.	Travelling Preachers.	Members	Sunday Schools.	Teachers.	Scholars.
1	England	24,400	2,571	501,300	6,426	121,493	810,280
2	Ireland	1,800	250	24,237	309	2,760	24,500
3	Australia	3,800	476	69,147	2,500	13,650	134,500
4	France		29	1,844	60	340	2,900

II. OTHER BRITISH METHODISTS.

5	Primitive	15,600	1,150	185,316	4,050	5,800	372,570
6	Welsh Calvinistic	562	18	120,000	—	—	—
7	United Free	3,493	432	79,756	1,345	27,000	189,500
8	New Connection	1,205	183	31,652	450	11,000	77,500
9	Bible Christian	1,874	302	31,542	—	9,875	53,500
10	Reform Union	562	18	7,745	185	3,300	19,000

III. UNITED STATES AND CANADA—EPISCOPAL.

11	Methodist Episcopal	12,555	12,096	1,743,000	21,093	222,374	1,602,334
12	" " South	5,832	4,004	840,000	9,000	58,600	421,500
13	African Methodist Episcopal	3,168	1,498	215,000	2,310	8,100	100,500
14	" " Episcopal, Zion	2,500	1,500	191,000	3,000	18,000	100,000
15	United Brethren	—	2,200	158,000	3,050	26,900	159,200
16	Coloured Methodist Episcopal	683	640	112,300	—	—	—
17	Evangelical Association	600	893	112,200	1,750	19,300	106,350
18	Methodist Episcopal, Canada	300	282	28,000	423	3,600	25,200
19	United American Methodist Episcopal	22	110	2,600	40	300	2,200
20	British Methodist Episcopal	20	45	2,200	35	220	2,000

IV. UNITED STATES AND CANADA—NON-EPISCOPAL.

21	Methodist Church, Canada	3,540	1,200	123,013	1,850	16,300	127,000
22	Methodist Protestant	925	1,314	113,405	—	—	105,000
23	American Wesleyan Association	200	250	25,000	550	3,100	14,500
24	Independent Methodist	—	24	12,550	—	—	—
25	Free Methodists	233	313	12,600	350	2,200	11,400
26	Primitive (Canada)	270	97	8,307	165	1,500	8,800
27	Bible Christians	197	81	8,000	—	1,250	9,000
28	Primitive (U.S.)	162	196	3,210	40	581	3,400
SUMMARY I.		30,000	3,326	596,528	9,295	138,243	972,180
" II.		23,206	2,103	456,031	6,030	56,975	712,070
" III.		25,680	23,268	3,404,300	40,701	357,394	2,517,284
" IV.		5,527	3,475	306,085	2,955	24,930	279,100
		84,453	32,172 Addl. Ministers.	4,762,944 32,172	59,161	577,542	4,480,634
				4,795,116			

GROUPS.

	Local Preachers.	Itinerant Preachers.	Members.	Sunday Schools.	Teachers.	Pupils.
I., II., and IV. Non-Episcopal	58,773	8,904	1,358,644	18,480	220,148	1,063,350
III. Episcopal	25,680	23,268	3,404,300	40,701	357,394	2,517,284

So vast has become this branch of the Church of our Lord Jesus Christ during the lives of only two generations of men. If its growth in spiritual power had kept pace with its increase in numbers, wealth, and learning, this one body of believers surely might by this time have evangelised the whole world.

At ten o'clock on the morning of Wednesday the 8th of September, 1881, the Rev. George Osborn, D.D., the venerable President of the British Wesleyan Conference, took the chair, and conducted the opening devotions.

The opening sermon was preached by Matthew Simpson, D.D., LL.D., Senior Bishop of the Methodist Episcopal Church in the United States. His text was John vi. 63 : "The words that I speak unto you, they are spirit and they are life."

It was a discourse worthy to be preached in John Wesley's own pulpit, in the City Road Chapel, the head-quarters of the Methodist world, and was listened to by a great concourse of people that almost filled the edifice.

The limits of this record do not admit of the reproduction of this or any of the other discourses that were given during the sessions of this memorable convocation, but the following brief sketch of one of the foremost men of our times will be of service and interest.

Bishop Simpson, a right reverend and truly apostolic man, is a native of the state of Ohio, was born in 1811, was educated for a physician, but feeling called to the work of the ministry, joined the Pittsburg Conference in 1833. It is a noteworthy fact that he who was for years the peerless pulpit orator of America was at first a very indifferent speaker. He says of himself, "At school the one thing I could *not* do was to speak : it cost me unspeakable effort to bring myself to attempt it, and I was invariably mortified by my failures. At length, having felt called to the ministry, I sought to forget myself as far as possible, and, banishing all thought of oratory, to give myself absolutely up to the task of saying things so that people could understand them. Then followed an increasing effort to impress the truth upon them, and by that means I have gained whatever power I possess." This very short and simple system of rhetoric, used in setting

forth the simple truths of the Gospel, has, by the rich baptism of the Holy Spirit, given Bishop Simpson great power over the hearts of his hearers. On some occasions his whole audience have arisen unconsciously to their feet, and crowded up close to the speaker, their souls wrapped in holy ecstasy while he opened to them the mysteries of the word of life. No man of our time in the American Church has ever realised more fully than he the truth of his text, "The words that I speak unto you, they are spirit and they are life." In 1852 he was elevated from the Presidency of the Indiana Asbury University to the Episcopal Chair, since which time he has been abundant in labours. Nine of his colleagues elected since his own election have died, but the life of this venerable man, in spite of several desperate and long-continued attacks of disease, has been almost miraculously preserved. During the Civil War in America he was one of the confidential advisers of President Lincoln, and by his wisdom in counsel and his kindness in administration he has earned the title of a Christian statesman and an apostolic bishop. In the midst of his world-wide labours he has found time for a large amount of literary work, especially in the department of Methodist history. His published course of Lectures on Preaching, which were given on the Lyman-Beecher foundation of Yale College, will long remain a monument of Christian Catholicity by which the Methodist lecturer and the Congregationalist College were alike honoured. In his sermon Bishop Simpson spoke of a possible Protestant Œcumenical Council in the near future, by which still further unity of the Church of Christ may be secured; a thought eminently characteristic of his broad, far-seeing, and truly catholic mind, and one which may yet be realised as a result of the growing spirit of Christian unity, if even it be not forced upon the Church by the growing powers and subtle combinations of a hierarchy that has forfeited its title of "Catholic" by excluding from its pale and its sympathy all worshippers and all worship save its own.

The address of welcome was delivered by President Osborn on behalf of the British Conference, on which, and more especially on the London section thereof, the burden of hospitality rested; a burden borne so cheerfully, and a duty

performed so admirably, that it must have been sustained under the sweet inspiration of the words of our Lord, “It is more blessed to give than to receive.”

The generous hospitality of the Methodist mother towards her large family of daughters will be remembered with more than usual pleasure, because of the fact that the Mansion House, the official residence of the Lord Mayor of London, Alderman McArthur, M.P., a life-long Wesleyan, was the centre thereof. Indeed, from first to last, the most prominent feature of the Conference was that of good fellowship; it was as if a Christmas holiday had rolled round, and was to be celebrated by a grand family re-union. At this distance of time it would be hard to tell what the Methodist Œcumenical Conference was intended to accomplish, or to mention anything it actually did accomplish, beyond what might be properly understood as included in the phrase, “A family gathering.” The fact that these men, and the millions they represented, were indeed members of one wide-spread family, was reason enough why they should meet together; perhaps it was also a reason why all questions of denominational difference were refused a place in the deliberations. Debate belongs not to household greetings, discussion is for the Parliament and the Senate-house, but not for a circle of united kinsfolk and guests; hence if any one in after years, reading the official record of that Conference, shall wonder what was done thereat, on account of the absence of an apparent practical or business outcome, let him bear in mind that there is a force more subtle than legislation, a conclusion more vital than any that can be reached by logic; it was this power that these men, born of a common spiritual ancestry, and holding a common faith, were met to invoke and exercise; namely, the warming, melting, cheering, assimilating power of brotherly affection: it was this conclusion that the world was desired to draw from this gathering; namely, Behold how, in spite of all their differences, these sons of Wesley still love one another! Whoever studies the record with this in mind will find abundant matter to repay his labours; whoever searches it for any other outcome will spend his time in vain.

Of the twenty-seven different sects there represented, four

classes, namely, the parent body, the American Episcopal Methodists, the Canadian, and the Australasian Methodists, have unquestioned cause, in their geography, for separate existence ; beyond this, so marvellously has the providence of God bridged the chasms, and removed the causes of contention, that if the separations were to be made *de novo*, there is nothing whatever in the present status of affairs to give any reasonable excuse for their being made at all. Slavery has ceased, exclusive ministerial power has ceased ; the episcopacy, so much dreaded by those who had seen only those specimens thereof afforded by the Churches of England and of Rome, has been demonstrated to be only a more efficient means, in the hands of wise, gentle, unselfish men for directing the great army of itinerant ministers ; a body so full of life and motion, that only prompt, heroic leadership is suited to its necessities, or can rightly bring out its strength. What then remains to keep up further divisions among the four great geographical bodies of Methodists ? Only questions of tradition, of personal ambition and personal will. To argue upon these, or any of them, would only be to rekindle smouldering fires : wisely, therefore, did the Conference leave the embers to the extinguishment of time and grace, and give attention only to those subjects on which these bodies all agree.

One of the strange features of the Conference was the apparently cordial relations existing between the delegates of the African Methodist Episcopal Church and those of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, the former delegation being headed by Bishop Paine, a black man, and the latter by Bishop McTyeire, one of the best representatives of the master race in the Southern States.

That former slaves and their former masters should be able to fraternise on a Methodist platform, and that, too, within less than twenty years after the abolition of slavery, is an evidence of the substantial unity of the Church of Christ, and an omen of good for the future substantial unity of Methodism.

Among the themes to which attention was given was education, the work of women in Methodism, the power and uses of the press, missions, Sunday-schools, amusements, tem-

perance, etc. The latter topic held an added interest from the presence in London of Mr. Francis Murphy, the Irish American apostle of total abstinence, under whose leadership millions of people in America have signed the pledge against strong drink. Another striking feature was the Exeter Hall meeting on the evening of Sept. 15th, for the reception of fraternal delegates from other Christian denominations.

The Pan-Presbyterian Council, lately held at Philadelphia in the United States, sent a letter of brotherly greeting, and a large delegation as well. Deputations were also received and heard from the Moravians, or United Brethren, the Baptist Churches of Great Britain, the Congregational Churches of Great Britain, and the British Society for the Propagation of the Gospel amongst the Jews. The absence of any delegation from, or any friendly notice by, that Church whose favour some Methodists still court, is a fact that will not fail to be remembered by that large proportion of the British Wesleyans who claim that the body to which they belong is not a mere attachment to the Church of England, but a free, separate, and complete Christian communion in its own right.

Everywhere and always Methodism has shown an example of broad Catholicity, and one great department of its work has been the quickening and refreshing of other communions by means of the souls converted in its sanctuaries.* To some extent this latter result is still sought, and should be sought in the Methodist body, but if all who have been converted through the use of Methodist means of grace had been retained in that communion, it would have nearly equalled all the other Protestant English-speaking denominations together; a state of things not at all safe or desirable, either for Methodists or their ecclesiastical neighbours.

The sessions of the Conference, which from first to last were marked by a high degree of harmony and joy, were destined to witness a very sad event. On the morning of the closing day, Tuesday, Sept. 20th, the news of the death of the President of the United States was received. The

* One of the topics on the programme of the Conference was, "The training of children in Christian Homes, so as to bring them to Christ, and attach them to Methodism."

following is the reference thereto in the columns of *The (Daily) Methodist Recorder* :—

“The Conference resumed this morning at ten o’clock, the chair being taken by the Rev. Dr. H. Pope, of the Methodist Church of Canada.

“The pulpit and platform were draped in black, expressive of the mourning of the Conference at the deaths of President Garfield and one of the delegates, Mr. E. Lumby, of Halifax.

“The devotional exercises were conducted by the Rev. J. M. Reid (Methodist Episcopal Church), who read the 39th and 40th Psalms, and in his prayer made special and solemn reference to the sorrowful intelligence received this morning.

“Rev. E. E. Jenkins (Wesleyan Methodist) said : Mr. President,—On the first day of the Œcumenical Conference, we sent across the Atlantic to the afflicted wife of the President of the United States an expression of our deep sympathy and of our fervent hope ; on this last day I am going to move, if I can do it, that a message be sent to the widow of the honoured personage whom God, in His inscrutable providence, has taken from that nation, and from the ranks of intelligent and Christian rulers. Nothing unites men like sorrow, and this deepest and extremest sorrow has united more closely than they were ever joined together the great American people and ourselves in England. There, of course, every house will be in mourning, and every heart sad ; but I may venture to say, next to the American nation, this nation has put on a sackcloth of mourning, as wide and as deep as the limits of our own empire. Sorrow dissolves rank, and the Queen upon the throne, who has on several occasions sent expressions of her sympathy, is only one with her meanest subjects in this great grief. We, Mr. President, who are English delegates, accord the expression of our deepest sorrow to our brethren from America. I was profoundly touched, sir, when following the prayer of Dr. Reid, who referred to his ruler as a brother, and asked that the ‘widow of our brother’ might be sustained ; and I felt in that prayer that the late President Garfield was not a remote sovereign in distant majesty, but a relative at home. I honour the sentiment, and I feel how profound must be the consternation of that sorrow which just now oppresses our beloved brethren whom we have so gladly hailed from the other side of the water. This is not a time, sir, when we can say many words. I would have said fewer if I could have done so. I beg to move, and I hope, sir, that you will permit Dr. Douglas, who represents the Canadian nation here, to second the resolution :—

“‘That this Œcumenical Methodist Conference, assembled on its last day of session, hears with the deepest grief the intelligence of the decease of President Garfield, and expresses its profound sympathy with the American nation, and in particular with Mrs. Garfield, in this great and sorrowful bereavement.’

“Rev. G. Douglas (Methodist Church of Canada) : Mr. President,—I, with deep emotion, would second the resolution which has just been proposed. As coming from the Dominion of Canada, where our American companionship with the Great Republic is so intimate, I am sure that

there will be tears of sadness and sorrow from the Atlantic to the Pacific throughout the Dominion of Canada. I have but few words to utter, except it be to say that by letters received since I have been in this city from the United States, we have learned how greatly Mrs. Garfield has been sustained in her unutterable sorrow. We join hands, Mr. President, with our brethren on this side of the Atlantic, in tendering our deepest sympathy, our hearts' sorrow, and our prayers to Him, to her who this day is written a widow.”

The resolution was adopted in solemn silence, all the members rising to their feet, after which the chairman announced that the resolution would be forwarded by cable to America.

At the close of the morning session of the Methodist Ecumenical Conference, the American delegates were called together, and the meeting was organised by the appointment of Bishop Simpson, as president, and Bishop McTyeire, of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, as vice-president. The Rev. Arthur Edwards, of Chicago, and Gen. Clinton B. Fisk, were chosen secretaries.

The telegraphic report of the last moments of President Garfield was then read by the Rev. Dr. Newman, and a committee, consisting of four officers of the meeting, with Bishop Paine, Dr. McFerrin, Gov. E. O. Stannard, Dr. J. P. Newman, Dr. W. H. Wheeler, Dr. J. M. Walden, and Judge E. O. East, was formed to prepare a proper minute for adoption by the Americans of the Conference, and a telegram to be sent to the family of the late President.

Prayer was then offered by Bishop McTyeire, after which the meeting adjourned.

The committee met at once, and adopted the following resolution :—

“The American delegates to the Methodist Ecumenical Conference, at a meeting held in London, September 20th, 1881, unanimously adopted the following minute:—Resolved, that we have heard with profound sorrow of the death of James A. Garfield, President of the United States, which blow falls all the more painfully upon our heads, because it comes to us in a foreign land. We join our countrymen everywhere in mourning our great national loss. President Garfield was an able statesman, a pure man, a humble Christian. We most sincerely sympathise with the noble, faithful wife, Mrs. Garfield, who has given to the world a higher suggestion of Christian strength and wifely devotion. We commend her and her children and the President's aged mother to God and to the word of His grace, praying that they may be divinely comforted.”

The above was telegraphed to Mrs. Garfield, with a proper statement of the circumstances under which the resolution was adopted.

Thus amid tears, as well as songs and prayers, was this convocation brought to a close, but not until permission had been made for another similar assembly, probably in America, and possibly in the year 1884, which will be the centenary year of the Methodist Episcopal Church.

With the close of the Methodist Œcumenical Conference closes this "Short History of the People called Methodists." Both this volume and the Conference records abound in praises of the genius, power, and piety of the leader of that people now grown to be the largest body of really active evangelical Christian believers in the world. But Methodism is now, and was always, more than its chief apostle; it was the showing forth, in modern times, of that selfsame power that wrought such mighty works at Pentecost.

Happy will it be for those who bear this name, now so much honoured, but once so much despised, if in this era of their worldly power and greatness they depart not from their simplicity, lose not their early vigour, and fail not through overmuch prosperity to carry on the mighty work of reformation and revival which the great Head of the Church has entrusted to their hands.

THE END.

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	MAR - 9 1978	FEB 28 1995
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		JUN 29 2006
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